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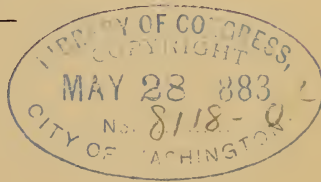


THE
CHRISTIAN ORDINANCES;

BEING

A HISTORICAL INQUIRY INTO THE PRACTICE
OF TRINE IMMERSION, THE WASHING
OF THE SAINTS' FEET AND
THE LOVE-FEAST.

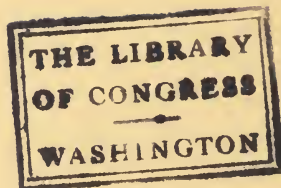
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By C. H. FORNEY, D. D.,
Editor of THE CHURCH ADVOCATE.



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TO THE
GENERAL BROTHERHOOD
OF THE
CHURCH OF GOD,

WHOSE MOTTO IS: EARNESTLY CONTEND FOR THE FAITH ONCE
DELIVERED TO THE SAINTS;

WHOSE ACCEPTED AND HONORED MISSION IS: THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE CHURCH UPON PRIMITIVE AND APOSTOLIC PRINCIPLES;

AND

WHOSE SUPREME RULE IS THE FORMAL PRINCIPLE OF THE
REFORMATION—THE SUBJECTION OF THE CONSCIENCE AND THE LIFE TO
THE PRIMARY AUTHORITY OF THE SCRIPTURES—

THIS VOLUME IS SINCERELY DEDICATED BY

THE AUTHOR.



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INTRODUCTION.

THE author of this work has the unusual statement to make to the reader that he has very reluctantly prepared it for the press, and that it is published against his earnest and persistent protest. He has, however, not the less devoted time and talent with much assiduity to its preparation; and now submits it to the judgment of his kind and generous readers, with the hope that it may in some measure assist them in coming to right conclusions respecting the number, form and character of the Christian ordinances.

This book owes its origin to the action of the General Eldership of the Church of God, in general assembly convened at Findlay, Ohio, in the year A. D. 1881. A short time prior to that meeting the author, in answer to certain questions, had published a series of editorials in *The Church Advocate* on "*The Love-feast and the Communion.*" They made such a favorable impression upon the minds of the members of the General Eldership that at its meeting, as above indicated, a resolution was adopted directing the Board of Publication to have the series published in more permanent and easily accessible form. The author had accepted this action as more complimentary than serious. But the Board, after a delay of a year and a half, became impressed with the mandatory character of the action of the General Eldership, and resolved to carry out its instruction. It was, however, thought advisable to add to the series of articles on the "*Love-feast and the Communion*"

two other series, the one on the Apostolic and post-Apostolic practice of feet-washing, and the other on trine immersion, thus making a far more complete work, and answering, in a measure, at least, a somewhat general demand for a work on the history of these religious institutions.

When, however, the labor of preparing these editorials for publication in this permanent form was entered upon, it soon became an evident fact that a thorough revision would be necessary in order fully to adapt them to take a place among the standard literature of the Church. Accordingly the form of these respective series was entirely changed; the greater part of the series on feet-washing, and the entire series on trine immersion, were rewritten; the fifth and sixth chapters were added to the discussion on feet-washing, and the series on trine immersion was enlarged to nearly twice its original length by the addition of a vast amount of valuable historical matter. The work may now, without affectation or over-estimation, be justly regarded as presenting the particular phases of the questions-discussed in as complete and comprehensive a manner as any work extant.

The reader will find no abstruse dialectical discussion, but an orderly and plain presentation of historical facts. These facts are so arranged as to show their immediate bearing on the questions at issue. In Part I will be found a searching investigation of the claim that trine immersion can be historically traced to the time of the Apostles. That this claim cannot be sustained is made manifest by the reduplication of the most convincing historical proof. This mode of baptism is hence rejected; not alone, however, because the practice of it cannot be traced to the Apostles; but, in addition to this, because the evidence seems conclusively to indicate that it was not the original practice

and institution of Christ, but was introduced toward the close of the second century.

In Part II, by a similar process of reasoning, the practice of washing the saints' feet as a religious rite is traced in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic times. The evidence here seems to be somewhat stronger than in the case of trine immersion, and yet in itself is pronounced insufficient as a basis upon which to establish an ordinance. But this testimony, taken in connection with the example and precept of Christ, as recorded in John's Gospel, and the specific mention of the practice by Paul, is regarded as amply sufficient to warrant the practice of this beautiful ceremony as a religious ordinance. The opinion that Christ instituted this rite is confirmed by the testimony of an eminent Quaker of the eighteenth century, and by the critical analysis of Doctor William Bohmer, an accomplished German scholar.

In Part III the historical argument in favor of the Agape, or full meal, in connection with the Communion is discussed. The practice is more fully and clearly sustained than either trine immersion or the washing of the saints' feet, but it is not accepted as an ordinance of divine institution, because there is wanting the divine command, or any favoring indications in the Scriptures. Incidentally the question of weekly Communion is discussed, and a careful investigation is made of the meaning of "breaking bread," as found in the Acts.

The author would have each reader begin the perusal of this book with a mind as thoroughly free from bias or prejudice as may be possible, and with a supreme purpose to accept and practice whatever may fairly be found in, or deduced from, the word of God. We claim but one ultimate reason for any ceremonial practice—that it have the will and word of God for the basis upon which it rests.

We reject nothing but for the all-sufficient reason that it lacks divine authority. The authority, for or against a practice, of the church or of tradition, unsupported by the Scriptures, cannot bind our consciences. That the Divine Spirit may guide us into all truth is our paramount desire; that the blessing of the Triune God may accompany this book is our earnest prayer.



PART I.
SINGLE IMMERSION THE TRUE BAPTISM.



CHAPTER I.

The Issues between Baptists.

THERE is, perhaps, not a single truth, nor an ordinance of the Christian religion, which has not been either disputed, denied, perverted, or wholly rejected. The true and the right in religion have always needed apologists and defenders. Error, like weeds, springs up of itself, and attains strength and maturity without cultivation or protection. Its source and origin are often so mysterious and so wholly obscured that it claims divine paternity or Apostolic origin with a marvelous measure of success. The advocates of the true ways of the Lord always meet with opposition. The truth which they represent will be attacked; the ordinances for which they contend will be disputed or rejected.

The experience of the Church of God has been for fifty years an illustration of the position here stated. We have adopted the word of God as our only rule of faith and practice; and our determination to accept all the doctrines and ordinances which can be established by its teachings has been invariably and publicly proclaimed. And these ordinances we deem it our duty to practice according to

the example of Christ and his Apostles, in so far as we may be in anywise able to determine said practice. But we meet with persistent opposition. This opposition is at times less honorable in its methods than should be expected. Secretly, like wolves among sheep, men steal among innocent church members and seek to turn them to a faith other than that which we have found taught in God's word. Specious pleas for other views are printed in cheap form and circulated by private enterprise, whereby other views of Christian doctrine and religious ordinances are sought to be established. This necessitates an examination of the grounds upon which such views appeal to us for acceptance. Hence this discussion of a question which in the main has been settled for centuries.

On the subject of baptism there are two grand divisions into which the Christian army falls. The one portion holds to baptism by immersion (as it is commonly stated); the other holds to baptism by affusion. But while the latter are but slightly divided among themselves relative to mode, the great body of them practicing sprinkling, the former are divided into two or three hostile parties. The Greek Church, together with a few small bodies of American and continental Christians, practice trine immersion; while the great body of Baptists, so-called, and a number of Churches of different names, practice single immersion. The Church of God classes itself among those who practice single immersion, believing this to have been the original action and mode of baptism as instituted and practiced by Christ and his Apostles. To the defense of this position we are here invited. And we accept the honor and assume the duty, confident that whatever may be the verdict, the purpose and the object have been alike honest and in strictest fidelity to the truth.

We can say in advance that our arguments and positions are not likely to be new to those who have thoroughly investigated the subject. The entire body of literature touching the point at issue is limited, thus affording but little opportunity for the development of any new facts. The appeal of our opponents is most confidently made to the history of the early church, whereby it is attempted to raise a reasonable presumption in favor of trine immersion as the Apostolic practice and the Divine institution. This history, so far as this rite is concerned, we propose to examine. We shall inquire into the historical citations upon which our opponents rely in their attempts to trace trine immersion to the Apostles, or to establish the Apostolic origin of single immersion.

That our readers may be sure that we do not misrepresent our opponents, we shall advise them at this point of the source of our information. In 1874, a small tract was published at Urbana, Illinois, entitled "The Origin of Single Immersion." It is a letter addressed to one of the leading advocates of trine immersion, together with the answer thereto. The writer of the letter proposed "a few historical questions respecting the origin of single immersion," which are fully answered by his respondent. Two years earlier the writer of the above-noted letter had published a pamphlet with the elaborate title, "Trine Immersion Traced to the Apostles; Being a Collection of Historical Quotations from Modern and Ancient Authors, proving that A Three-Fold Immersion was the only method of baptizing ever practiced by the Apostles and their immediate successors." It is the historical testimony thus heralded which we propose to examine. These writers not only attempt, by their array of historical testimony, to prove the Apostolic practice of trine immersion, but, on

the other hand, they claim to furnish us with historic proof of the post-Apostolic origin of single immersion, and in this two-fold manner to establish the incorrectness of our position. The *origin* of trine immersion is the great question. Everything else as between us and those whose practice in this respect differs from ours is of secondary, we might say of no, moment until this point is settled. Hence, by whom single immersion was introduced, if it was not the original practice, is only of moment as collateral proof, and requires no investigation at our hands. Neither is it material what gave rise to the change in the mode of baptism from trine to single immersion, if the former was the original practice. These and other questions are raised in the first pamphlet referred to above; but we do not find it of any importance to burden our pages with a discussion of points of this character, since they only become of interest when adequate proof has been furnished that trine immersion was the practice of Christ and the Apostles.

In all discussions or controversies it is important to start out with propositions that are either self-evident or generally conceded. This we can do in this investigation. There are at least two points in this controversy which have been fully settled. These points are:

1. That trine immersion was practiced in the early part of the third century, and that it had become the quite general practice of the main body of the Catholic Church, so known then, before the close of the third century.

2. That from about the middle of the fourth century single immersion began (again) to take the place of trine immersion, and that thenceforth it gradually prevailed in all parts of Christendom, except in the Greek Church and among minor sects, and does so prevail to this day where immersion is practiced.

These points we do not pretend to question; and hence *in so far* we are free to concede that those who contend for trine immersion are right. But we need constantly to bear in mind just how far this carries us toward the goal whither our opponents would lead us. Just so far, for the present, that trine immersion was practiced early in the third century. We cannot go a step further.



CHAPTER II.

The Force of our Previous Concessions.

WHEN the concession is made, as in our previous chapter, that in the early part of the third century trine immersion was practiced, and that it became quite general before the close of that century, the question arises, What bearing has this concession, this fact, on the point at issue? In other words: Do the two points which we have been willing to accept as settled furnish the requisite premises from which to draw the conclusion of our opponents that trine immersion is of Divine or Apostolic origin? Certainly not. No logician would tarnish his reputation by making such an affirmation. These points do not settle the question as to the origin of single immersion. They do not even touch it. The fact that trine immersion was not only known, but generally practiced by the end of the third century; the fact that it was practiced, to some extent, at least before the middle or at the beginning of the third century, as we have admitted, does not in itself prove that it was instituted by Christ and practiced by the Apostles. And yet, despite this fact, we shall show that the weight of historical testimony is of even more recent times than the date to which our first point refers.

But we are not willing to rest the position here taken on a mere affirmation. It is a conceded principle that what holds good in one case equally holds good in all like cases; that like rules govern like facts. Hence, what we are disposed to grant or demand in one case, we shall not hesitate to demand or grant in all similar cases. If we are to accept one practice as Apostolic or Christly in its origin, which existed early in the third century of the Christian era, so will we, for no other reason, ask that our opponents grant a similar origin to any thing else then existing and claiming divine origin. And what we are disposed to ask we shall not feel disinclined to grant. Are our opponents willing to be governed by this principle? They find trine immersion in the third century. They find authors in the third century possibly who claim that it was practiced by the Apostles, but of such practice they can find no examples and can produce no evidence. Upon the strength of the statements made by these authors, and upon their opinions, they insist that trine immersion is of Apostolic origin. They should strive to be consistent. Tertullian is the first author who mentions trine immersion, but he does not claim that it was instituted by Christ. Just what he says, and what weight to attach to his testimony, we do not now inquire. That he testifies to the practice of trine immersion we now state as a simple fact. But Tertullian also testifies to the practice of infant baptism in his time, though advocates of this practice call him "that ancient adversary," because he argues in favor of delaying it, though we believe he nowhere speaks of it or opposes it as unscriptural or as an innovation. Irenæus, who lived before Tertullian, is also said to have written of infant baptism. He was a scholar of Polycarp, "through whom he may be regarded as having sat at the feet of St. John, the Apostle

and Evangelist." But these authors speak of infant baptism as a matter of fact, and are not giving opinions. They testify as strongly to its Apostolic origin as others do to the Apostolic origin of trine immersion. Now, if their testimony in the one case is good, why is that of others not good in the other? If the existence of trine immersion in the third century, together with the then existing *tradition* that it was of Apostolic origin, is to be accepted as conclusive of such origin, why are not similar testimony and tradition conclusive in the case of infant baptism? Our answer is as follows: The conclusion in the one case is as legitimate as in the other. We reject both, because we do not find them instituted by Christ or practiced by his immediate Disciples and Apostles. In the case of foot-washing the facts are reversed. There we find a command given by Christ, and this command taught and obeyed by the Disciples. Hence we accept that as an ordinance. Here we consistently reject both infant baptism and trine immersion, because their earliest observance is not connected with a command of Christ or practice by the Apostles. Our opponents on single immersion inconsistently, and for no good reason, accept the testimony of history and *tradition* for trine immersion, and reject it for infant baptism.

Now, in view of these evident and conclusive principles, it must be, at least, clearly evident what the force of the admission is which we made in our first point. It will, also, the more be clear that in examining testimony of a historical character, we would not need to concern ourselves with anything that took place in the third century, or since the time of Tertullian, or, at least, after A. D. 300. For when our opponents insist on proving the origin of single immersion, after the close of the third century, they introduce a question about which we do not need to trouble ourselves, at least not in a direct manner. That single im-

mersion was *revived* in the fourth century, we know ; but just when, and how, and by whom, are questions that may be laid aside. It is the origin of *trine* immersion into which we are inquiring. *And here the one great thing, on the part of our adversaries, which is lacking to make their argument conclusive, is the PROOF THAT TRINE IMMERSION IS OF DIVINE ORIGIN, THAT IT WAS INSTITUTED BY CHRIST.* It is a question of fact, and not of opinion, or of tradition. It is too hazardous to accept every practice and doctrine which these early authors represent as having come down the stream of tradition. If we should accept trine immersion because it was already practiced in Tertullian's time, and was claimed soon after as an Apostolic *tradition* ; for the same reason we should have to receive every thing else which marred the symmetry of the church in those times, and encumbered divinely instituted ordinances. We should then adopt the sign of the cross, the sacramental use of honey, and the anointing with oil in connection with baptism. These rest upon the same authority with trine immersion.

Neither, in this controversy, can we be called upon to prove a negative, and so to establish the fact that trine immersion was *not* of Apostolic origin, or was not practiced in the first and second centuries. We need simply to point to the total *absence* of proof that it *was*, unless such proof should be produced ; to the fact that it finds no place in the New Testament ; to the fact that it was defended on the ground of *tradition alone*, just like many other unscriptural practices. And this, of course, we shall do. But otherwise, until our friends who advocate trine immersion produce some reliable evidence that it was instituted by Christ, and practiced by his Apostles, the advocates of single immersion have but little to do.

As to the origin of single immersion in post-Tertullian

times there is not much dispute, although there is some difference of opinions as to the leading agent. It is generally affirmed that, in the fourth century, single immersion had its origin with one Eunomius, bishop of Cyzicum, probably from A. D. 360 to 394, in which year he died (Lardner). We care not to dispute this point, though it was doubted in a much earlier age. Probably Eunomius in one place, and others in other places and at different times, re-introduced single immersion both before and after A. D. 400; but we deny the implied assumption that trine immersion had been the practice from the days of the Apostles down to that time. We are going up the stream of history, and not down. We have granted all that is claimed as early as Tertullian's time, except the universality of trine immersion. But in making this concession, and especially in granting the agency of Eunomius and others in the revival or re-introduction of single immersion in the latter half of the fourth century and earlier, we in nowise concede anything touching the position of our opponents on the question of the *Apostolic origin* of trine immersion. We do so upon the primary fact of the absence of a word of command from Christ directing the performance of trine immersion, and the consequent absence of evidence of such a practice by the Apostles; and also upon the generally-conceded fact that the stream of *tradition*, out of which trine immersion was fished, also brought down to Tertullian's time many other unscriptural practices to which the church has tenaciously adhered.

There is also another matter of grave moment that should not be overlooked in this connection. We refer to the well-known fact that in Tertullian's time, and even somewhat earlier, there already appeared the germs of the Catholic Church; and that those who claimed to belong to it

often ignored in their writings everything outside of said Church, and *vice versa*. Herein is one of the reasons of the apparent conflict of historical testimony on many points, and that general chaos which so often seems to reign in the historical documents of those early years. This fact largely influenced the writers of that period in their views and opinions, as is evident in the case of Tertullian himself. He became a staunch defender of Montanism. Before that he was a "Catholic." The "Shepherd of Hermas" was then already extant. Tertullian had praised this book as a Catholic, but he abused and denounced it as a Montanist.

Besides this, the important fact should be kept in mind that the churches in the various countries in which they were established were not in such close communication, nor as thoroughly unified and bound together as a given Church or denomination is at the present time. The church in one country often drifted entirely away from the prevailing practices and doctrines of the churches in other countries. On this account the testimony of a bishop even like Tertullian may be very misleading as to any other country than the one in which he lived and about which he testifies. And even on this question there is at least good ground for advising our readers in advance of this fact. Hence, in so far as our discussion has already carried us, there is nothing logically and conclusively established in favor of trine immersion, and that for the simple reason that the point at issue, being a question of fact, has no authentic testimony in its favor for Apostolic times in the views and practices of a later period. Our opponents here generally assume the strategical point which they *ought to*, but which they *cannot*, prove—the practice, by the Apostles and Apostolic Fathers, in obedience to Christ's word of command, of a threefold immersion for the one baptism.

CHAPTER III.

The Testimony for Trine Immersion.

WE have given our readers assurance that the requisite testimony connecting the practice of trine immersion, in the third century, with Apostolic example cannot be produced. We do not ask them, in so critical a matter as this, either to rely simply upon our affirmation, or to depend upon such historical testimony as *we* might be disposed to place before them. We shall hence proceed to furnish the testimony cited by our friends who believe in trine immersion, and then show of how much weight in a controversy this testimony really is. They frequently cite Doctor Wall, Doctor Hinton, and other modern authors. But these we dismiss at once, for their testimony is wholly second-handed. They must rely upon ancient authors to confirm their testimony ; and we prefer to have these ancient authors cited at once. It is a recognized principle in all rules of evidence, that *in testifying to a question of fact no man is a competent witness who lived after the fact, except in so far as he cites authorities or witnesses who lived at the time.* Doctor Wall is only a witness to facts in his time, and is no better as an authority than any other person of requisite information. The same is true of Doctor Hinton. He lived long after the age in which trine immersion is said to have prevailed, and so cannot be

a competent witness to a matter of fact in the third century.

In thus rejecting the testimony of authors in modern times we do simply what we have a perfect right to do, and what is done by controvertialists everywhere. This is in fullest accordance with the rules governing all proceedings in courts of justice. That which they affirm is not called in question; but their affirmations must be based upon the testimony of older witnesses, and we demand that these latter be produced. If this is not possible, whence did these modern witnesses derive their information? In matters of opinion or of exegesis the testimony of learned men of our times is as good as, and perhaps better than, that of the Fathers; but in matters of fact we must throw out all who were not eye-witnesses. In confirmation of this view we can cite authorities in abundance, and among them the very men who would be most benefited by a contrary rule. Common sense dictates that testimony to a matter of fact can only be received from those who witnessed the fact. Testimony to the existence of an opinion or belief is subject to the same rule, since opinions and beliefs are facts. What weight should be attached to an opinion in a case like the present, touching the origin of trine immersion, we shall examine later.

With this matter definitely settled, we are prepared to hear testimony. On trine immersion, Sozomen, after modern authors, is usually the first witness cited. Can he be allowed to testify? Only as to facts of which he was a witness, and to the existence of opinions and traditions in his time. With Sozomen, the historian, is usually coupled Theodoret, the theologian, because their testimony bears on the same point, and was delivered nearly at the same time. They were living contemporaneously. Sozo-

men was a lawyer, at Constantinople, as well as a church historian, and closed his life and labors about A. D. 440. Theodoret was bishop of Cyrus, in Syria, closing his useful career about A. D. 457. We have already laid it down as a settled point that trine immersion existed more than a century before these dates; also, that single immersion had been revived some time before this, and so might reasonably dismiss these witnesses. But that our readers may see what weight is to be attached to their testimony, we shall produce it, and also briefly examine it.

The testimony of Theodoret is as follows:

“He (Eunomius) subverted the law of holy baptism, which had been handed down from the beginning from the Lord, and from the Apostles, and made a contrary law, asserting that it was not necessary to immerse the candidate for baptism thrice, nor to mention the names of the Trinity, but to immerse once only into the death of Christ.”

Sozomen says: “*Some say that Eunomius was the first who dared to bring forward the notion that the divine baptism ought to be administered by a single immersion; and to corrupt the tradition that has been handed down from the Apostles, and which is still observed among all. But whether it was Eunomius or any other person who first introduced heretical opinions concerning baptism,*” etc. This quotation gives the essential part of what this author says on the subject. Others are equally indefinite with reference to the author of the change spoken of.

Now, what is this testimony worth? What does it establish? We will notice,

1. A few facts concerning this testimony and these witnesses. Theodoret died in the year A. D. 457. How long before this his work on the History of the Church was written is not definitely known; but it closes with the year

427. The most important part about it, touching our present subject, is that it embraces only a century ; or, to be more precise, one hundred and two years, from 325 to 427. Hence, his testimony is not so valuable, since he does not inquire into historical facts which fall within an earlier period. As to baptism by a threefold immersion, he testifies that it was abandoned by Eunomius, though it "had been handed down from the beginning from the Lord" by *tradition*. Whether it was a true or false tradition he did not inquire. The history of Hermias Sozomenus covers nearly the same period, or from A. D. 323 to 423. Sozomen died A. D. 440. His testimony as to facts, beliefs and opinions touching trine immersion does not carry us beyond A. D. 323, or but two years further than the history of Theodoret. But facts to which they testify, which could not have come under their own observation, we need only accept upon the testimony of others who witnessed them. And, at best, their histories do not take us further back than the time in which we have already granted that trine immersion was practiced.

2. Church historians at that early day were comparatively numerous, but most of them, like in the case of Sozomen and Theodoret, extended their histories over but brief periods. Socrates, also a jurist of Constantinople, composed a history extending from A. D. 306 to 439. He does not, we believe, cast any light on this question. It was, like the works of Sozomen and Theodoret, "a continuation" of an earlier history. Eusebius is called the father of church history. He wrote in the first half of the fourth century. His church history begins with the birth of Christ, and closes with the year 324. It is quite valuable in many respects, but it does not help our opponents in this controversy. While in several places he speaks of

baptism, he nowhere alludes to trine immersion as the original and Apostolic mode. He was preceded by Hege-sippus, who lived in the middle of the second century. Only a few fragments of his work have been preserved; but these, while they refer to the Hemerobaptists, and to various points in the practice of the church, do also maintain complete silence on the subject of trine immersion. Now, it is rather singular that these earlier historians are so wholly silent on this point, *if trine immersion was then practiced*. Does it not seem apparent that their silence militates against the assumption that such a practice existed in those early ages of the church to which their histories specially relate? At any rate, later historians did not derive the information from them that trine immersion was handed down from the Apostles. It looks very much as if that were an opinion based upon exegesis, and not a fact of authentic history.

3. Though already partly answered, we will still raise the question touching Sozomen and Theodoret, To what are they capable of testifying? To facts that came under their personal observation. If they testify to events before their time it must be upon the authority of others who were witnesses. They both testify that Eunomius favored single immersion; but Sozomen's testimony is of such a character as to cast doubt on the statement that Eunomius re-introduced single immersion. Hence, as far as this testimony is concerned, single immersion may have been practiced long before the time of Eunomius. For Sozomen says, "*Some say that Eunomius was the first who dared to bring forward the notion that the Divine baptism ought to be administered by a single immersion.*" Further on he says: "Whether it was Eunomius or any other person." Observe that Sozomen lived seventeen years nearer

the time in which Eunomius flourished than did Theodoret, yet he was not as positive in his testimony that Eunomius introduced single immersion as Theodoret. Besides, Sozomen lived nearer to Cyzicum, of which Eunomius was bishop, than did Theodoret. Between the people of Constantinople, where Sozomen lived, and those of Cappadocia and Cyzicum, where Eunomius flourished, there was constant communication, Cyzicum being not over seventy miles from Constantinople. But between Cappadocia and Syria there was little intercourse. It was also at Constantinople where Eunomius was tried for heresy. And being formally condemned for teaching the *anomian* doctrine of the Trinity, it is quite possible that errors and practices were ascribed to him incorrectly. Hence the uncertainty of the historian most likely to know. And, at any rate, if these two witnesses could not agree touching a matter of such recent occurrence, what dependence is to be put upon their testimony in reference to a matter of fact four hundred years old?

4. It is also of moment to observe that neither of these witnesses testifies as to the practice of trine or single immersion outside of what was then already called the Catholic Church. Sozomen expressly designates the body of which he writes, "The Catholic Church." It is well known that large bodies of Christians were then already regarded as outside the Catholic Church, and that the truth, in many instances, is to be found among them. It was common, as it yet is, among writers in the Catholic Church, to ignore these outside bodies altogether, or to make claims of antiquity for their own practices and ordinances not borne out by impartial history. Theodoret and Sozomen may justly be classed among such historians, and their testimony may relate exclusively to practices in the Catholic Church, and to the

claims of Apostolic authority for the same. This may appear more clearly when further investigation has been made. Hence, outside the Catholic Church, and before its organization, and so before the time of Eunomius, single immersion may have prevailed for aught these witnesses say.

5. Since these two witnesses do not positively testify as to who introduced single immersion, it follows that the *documentary proof* then extant was either conflicting or silent on this point. Then, too, there could be nothing positive *as to time* when single immersion was introduced into the Catholic Church. Sozomen declares that "*some say*" Eunomius introduced single immersion. He does not know; does not pretend to determine; could not determine who. He, a writer of an ecclesiastical history, born near the time when Eunomius was adjudged guilty of heresy, and living in the very city where the trial took place, and within seventy miles of the church of which Eunomius was bishop, was not able to determine the assumed fact that Eunomius introduced single immersion! Theodoret, living across the mountains in Syria, and among a people who had no intercourse of moment with the Cappadocians, was one of the "some" who said it was Eunomius. Other "some" asserted differently. Here, then, is one witness, unconfirmed by documentary evidence, who says it was Eunomius; while another witness, of his own time, declares that others believed differently. Now, it is somewhat strange that Sozomen, a historian, did not know in A. D. 440 who introduced single immersion, claimed to have had an existence less than a century, and that some modern authors should know it so positively, and yet should only have the testimony, such as it is, of Sozomen and Theodoret!

Weak and defective as the testimony is which we have been examining touching the origin of single immersion, we are willing to accept it as *proving* that *trine* immersion was generally practiced in the Catholic Church in the latter half of the fourth century. But there still remains a period of nearly four hundred years about which these witnesses do not, and cannot, testify, except upon documentary evidence. If they did, their testimony would be rejected as worthless in any court of justice, or according to the universally accepted rules of evidence. If they cannot agree as to a matter of fact of such supposed recent date as the introduction of single immersion by Eunomius, how are they to know of a certainty of much older facts? Tradition is utterly unreliable. They must be supported by *documentary evidence*. Eminent authorities support us in this view. Writing of diocesan episcopacy, Dr. Miller, formerly professor of ecclesiastical history in Princeton Theological Seminary, says on a point every way similar to this: "Suffer me, my brethren, again to remind you of the principle upon which we proceed in this part of our inquiry. If it would be demonstrated from the writings of the Fathers, that in one hundred, or even in fifty years [in four years or four centuries, he remarks in another place], after the death of the last Apostle, the system of diocesan episcopacy had been generally adopted in the church, it would be nothing to the purpose."

It is, therefore, of no account to prove that trine immersion prevailed in the Catholic Church, A. D. 440, or during the hundred years preceding, if Christ did not institute it. And as for tradition respecting its Apostolic origin, that has no weight, as we shall have occasion to show in a subsequent chapter.

CHAPTER IV.

Testimony of the Early Fathers.

WE have examined the testimony of two church historians touching the practice of trine immersion, in order to discover the extent of their knowledge with reference to the antiquity of this mode of baptism. As their testimony covers a period of one hundred years, from A. D. 323 to 427, during the whole of which they seem to affirm the existence of this practice, it is evident that they cannot speak from personal knowledge. We have, hence, a perfect right to ask for the testimony of other witnesses. We are freely accommodated in this respect, as our opponents recognize the justice of our demand. The first witness cited is Chrysostom. He assures us that "Christ delivered to his disciples one baptism in three immersions of the body, when he said to them, 'Go teach all nations,' " &c.

It would be a justifiable act to reject this testimony entirely, if it may be dignified as testimony. The reason is, that it does not state a matter of fact at all, but simply gives an opinion. He does not say that trine immersion was *practiced* in his day, although we are ready to concede that it was. But his testimony is worthless to establish

that fact. Chrysostom wrote near the close of the fourth century. He is a competent witness as to what the practice of the church was in his time; but he cannot testify as to what Christ "delivered to his disciples." He is no better witness for a fact which transpired three hundred and fifty years before his time, than a man now is, though over one thousand eight hundred years have elapsed since it occurred. That the opinion cited as testimony was the prevailing opinion in the time of Chrysostom, we are not averse to granting; and yet he does not say so, and hence his testimony only establishes his own opinion. And as touching his opinion, we justly say as Augustine did of the authority of Cyprian: "His writings I hold not to be canonical, but examine them by the canonical writings; and in them, what agreeth with the authority of divine Scripture I accept, with his praise; what agreeth not I reject, with his leave." We are now as competent to determine what Christ delivered to his Disciples, as found in the words that Chrysostom quotes, as he was, and so cannot bow to his authority. So all authorities on rules of evidence decide.

That we are not putting it too strongly when we say that the words quoted from Chrysostom do not prove that trine immersion was practiced in his day can be readily illustrated. Mark, he does not say it was *practiced*. Mr. Chrystal, in his *History of the Modes of Baptism*, declares just as unequivocally as Chrysostom, that "Christ delivered one baptism in three immersions." Yet Mr. Chrystal was an Episcopalian, and practiced as his Church does—sprinkling, and not trine immersion. So, from all that Chrysostom *says*, he may not have practiced trine immersion; although from other testimony we know that this mode of baptism was practiced in his time and country. He was a fellow-

countryman of Theodoret, and lived between forty and fifty years earlier.

The next witness is Augustine. He was nearly cotemporaneous with Chrysostom, as the latter died in A. D. 407, and the former was not baptized until A. D. 387. He was baptized by Ambrose, at Milan, in Italy, by what is often called the Ambrosian method of baptizing, indicating that it was sectional. He is supposed to have practiced trine immersion, for he says: "After you professed your belief, three times did we submerge your heads in the sacred fountain." This is all of his testimony that we have furnished us; and, supposing he refers to baptism, it is conclusive that he practiced trine immersion. But it will be noted that we are still nearly four hundred years from Christ, in the midst of a period in church history when the church was full of errors and heresies. We have not yet ascended to the age in which the Apostolic Fathers lived, and preached, and wrote. And those most intimately acquainted with the history of those early centuries know how many things were attributed to Christ and his Apostles of which they were not the authors. These men base their views on two things, viz: Tradition, generally so utterly worthless; and the interpretation of Christ's words, "Baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." This interpretation is decidedly suspicious the more natural it may appear to some. And especially so when we take into account the fact that there is an entire absence of any indications of such an interpretation until after the time of the Apostolic Fathers.

The next witness is Ambrose, but fourteen years the senior of Augustine, having been born in A. D. 340. He became Bishop of Milan in A. D. 374. We have already referred to the Ambrosian method of baptizing, and have

assumed that this was trine immersion. Yet this is not certain. Ambrose himself speaks only of two immersions, a possible indication that the second and third were gradually added. He says: "Thou wast asked, 'Dost thou believe in God the Father Almighty?' Thou saidst, 'I do believe,' and wast immersed, that is, thou wast buried. Thou wast asked again, Dost thou believe on our Lord Jesus Christ and his crucifixion? Thou saidst, 'I believe,' and wast immersed again, and so wast buried with Christ." We do not say that three actions were not common under Ambrose; but he certainly does not so testify. An advocate of trine immersion has acknowledged this. He says: "He only speaks of the two first actions in baptism; the other, in the name of the Holy Ghost, must be inferred." In that way it is easy to derive trine immersion by tradition from the Apostles. It is unscientific and misleading. It is known to all readers of church history that the distinct personality of the Son was first defined, and not until a later Council was the equally distinct personality of the Spirit accepted. Hence in the testimony of Ambrose we may have a hint as to the origin of trine immersion. We do not now affirm this, for it is not in evidence as yet; but we have ample reason to believe that such was the origin of the threefold immersion or baptism.

The witness next cited is Basil, who died eighteen years earlier than Ambrose, but was born but twelve years earlier, in A. D. 328. He was a native of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia. He studied under the heathen philosophers at Athens, and then returned to his native city and became an advocate. He was ordained a Presbyter in A. D. 362; succeeded Eusebius as Bishop of Cæsarea in A. D. 370, and died in 379. He is quoted as saying: "In three immersions the great mystery of baptism is accomplished." Basil agrees

with the other witnesses from this region of the world, and so confirms their testimony as to the mode of baptism in his time. We are not aware that he says anything with reference to the re-introduction of single immersion by Eunomius, although he wrote a work of five books against Eunomius, entitled "Concerning the Holy Spirit." We have no occasion at this point to say anything about his testimony, except to note the fact that it speaks simply for his time. He does not indicate what the opinions were which prevailed relative to its origin. Doubtless he regarded it as of Apostolic origin, like the rest, handed down by tradition, as some of them specifically affirm. This point will receive special attention in a subsequent chapter.

The friends of trine immersion delight in referring us to Cyril, for the reason that he was born at Jerusalem, where he was also successively ordained Deacon, Presbyter, and Bishop. His career was a decidedly checkered one, and it is matter of doubt whether the fact of his nativity and official life at Jerusalem can add any weight to his testimony. He was twice deposed from the episcopate and finally banished by the order of the Emperor Valens, A. D. 367. He was elected Bishop in A. D. 351, after which date his testimony was written. His words are as follows: "After these things ye were led to the holy pool of divine baptism, as Christ was carried from the cross to the sepulcher. And each of you was asked whether he believed, etc., and made that saving confession, and descended three times into the water, and ascended again." This is clear testimony to the practice of trine immersion in the time of Cyril. He, however, gives us no light touching the origin of this mode of baptism. Whether he believed it to have been instituted by Christ or practiced by the Apostles we have no means of determining.

Next in order our opponents introduce the Apostolic Canons, claiming that they are to be placed somewhere between A. D. 315 and A. D. 200. It is confidently claimed that they "can be strictly relied upon in tracing Christian baptism from the birth of Cyril, A. D. 315, back to A. D. 200." We cannot concur in this opinion. No one who knows the historic facts, as now generally accepted, with reference to these Canons, will put any dependence upon them. One might, with equal propriety, quote the Apocrypha. Neander, the great church historian, says they are "spurious." With him concur nearly all the learned authors of our day. Not only are these Canons "spurious;" but there have been made extensive interpolations. Besides, they are of more recent origin than our trine immersion friends are disposed to claim. The consensus of opinions on the whole question may be thus stated upon eminent authority: "The *Constitutiones Apostolicæ* were probably written about the end of the third century; while the seventh book, which is essentially an abridgment of them, may have belonged to the beginning of the fourth century. The *Canones Apostolici*, which were also recognized by the church, were composed *at a later period*." Now, it is the fiftieth of the Apostolic *Canons* which is quoted to establish the practice of a threefold immersion. We have no doubt of the existence of this mode at that time—in the fourth century—for we have other testimony to establish it. But we utterly reject the testimony of these Canons when adduced to prove the practice of trine immersion before the close of the third century, and for the sufficient reason that they were not then in existence. The fiftieth Canon reads as follows: "If any Bishop or Presbyter do not perform three immersions of one initiation, but one immersion, which is given into the death

of Christ, let him be deposed. For the Lord did not say, 'Baptize into my death,' but, 'Go ye and make Disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Do ye, therefore, O Bishops, immerse thrice—into one Father, and Son, and Holy Ghost, according to the will of Christ by the Spirit."

Doubtless this was the action of some Synod or Council, which had authority so to speak to Bishops and Presbyters generally within its jurisdiction. But this very Canon, which is cited to prove the existence and general practice of trine baptism in the Catholic Church, also proves that single immersion was then practiced. To what extent no one can affirm. We know, however, that practices were oftentimes imposed almost as innovations by many of the primitive Councils and Synods. And the severity of the penalty for violating the Canon indicates the danger. Single immersion, then, could not have been unknown, or a new thing in isolated communities. Hence, if the claim should be allowed that these Canons are valid evidence for the practice of trine immersion as early as A. D. 200, as is claimed; then are they also evidence for the existence of single immersion at that early date. But it is claimed that Eunomius originated single immersion. He was not ordained a Bishop until A. D. 360. Hence, these Canons could not have existed earlier. Our opponents must hence either reject these Canons as testimony in favor of trine immersion in A. D. 200, or else they will have to abandon their position that Eunomius originated single immersion.

The next witness is one Monulus. Who he was, and when and where he lived, we have not been able to ascertain. We accept his testimony upon the authority of Cyprian. The latter was converted A. D. 246. He became bishop of Carthage A. D. 250, and suffered mar-

tyrdom A. D. 258. It is said by our opponents, that "at the famous Council of Carthage" Cyprian is quoted as reporting Monulus as having used the following language: "The true doctrine of our holy mother, the Catholic Church, hath always, my brethren, been with us, and doth yet abide with us, and especially in the article of baptism, and the trine immersion wherewith it is celebrated: our Lord having said, 'Go ye and baptize the Gentiles, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.' "

We have not been able to verify this quotation, though we have diligently examined the works of Cyprian. There are some rather suspicious circumstances connected with it. It is said that this language was used "at the famous Council of Carthage." No Ecumenical Council was ever held at Carthage. Various provincial councils and synods were held there, but they could hardly be regarded as "famous." But if Cyprian quotes these words of Monulus, it is probable they were spoken at a provincial council held at Carthage about A. D. 251, when a formal investigation was made into the case of the "lapsed," who had renounced Christianity during the persecution of Decius. Cyprian wrote a treatise *de Lapsis*, in which he discusses at length the question whether they should be re-baptized when restored. But then the bearing of this quotation upon such a question is not apparent. However, supposing that there is no mistake about it, and that it is genuine, it only serves to establish the fact that trine immersion existed in A. D. 251, and that it was practiced at Carthage for a considerable period prior to that date. As to its origin the testimony is not clear. Trine immersion is called "the true doctrine of our *holy mother*, the Catholic Church." But this "holy mother" has a large

family of unholy children, and we are not in doubt as to this one.

This completes the evidence of trine immersion up to the time of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian. With all its weak points and serious defects, we are not in doubt as to the verdict which it justifies. Evidently trine immersion existed during all the period covered by this testimony. But this is only what we conceded in advance. We admitted in the first chapter of this treatise "that trine immersion was practiced in the early part of the third century." The last witness testified in the middle of the third century, but assures us that it existed before that date. These witnesses, then, only prove what we were willing to grant in advance. It now remains to be seen whether we can be driven from our position, that there is no witness for trine immersion before A. D. 200.



CHAPTER V.

The first witnesses for trine immersion.

THE concurrent testimony of historians and archæologists is that Tertullian is the first author who speaks of trine immersion. Clement of Alexandria also testifies to the practice of this mode of baptism in Egypt. He simply speaks of it as a fact, saying: "Ye were conducted to a bath, just as Christ was carried to the grave, and were thrice immersed to signify the three days of his burial." It is worthy of observation that there is nothing in this testimony about the "holy mother, the Catholic Church," nor about the custom of baptizing with the name of the Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Clement was the cotemporary of Tertullian at Carthage, and wrote about the same time. He says nothing of the history or origin of this practice; nor does he intimate the extent to which it prevailed. An author who did not know that Clement of Rome was not an Apostle is not to be trusted on historical questions. He died about A. D. 220, the same year in which Tertullian is said to have died.

Tertullian also testifies to the practice of trine immersion in Egypt, as follows: "Then we are thrice dipped, answering somewhat more than the Lord prescribed in the

Gospel." Here we have trine immersion, as conceded in the opening of this discussion; but beyond this it is not possible to carry it. We admitted it as an established proposition that trine immersion was practiced in the early part of the third century, and all this array of testimony is insufficient to establish anything more. Tertullian died A. D. 220, and wrote his principal works within the last twenty years of his life. How long before that date trine immersion was practiced he does not in any wise intimate; although, according to the opinion of many learned authors, he does testify that it was not instituted by Christ and practiced by the Apostles. This point is said to be implied in the words, "answering somewhat more than the Lord prescribed in the Gospel." We are aware that "*respondentes*" means to answer; and it is therefore claimed that Tertullian means that candidates for baptism were required to respond to questions or "things mentioned *before* baptism." These translate the word *respondentes*, pledging. This is not its meaning. Besides, such a rendering is not in harmony with what follows—"more than the Lord prescribed." He prescribed immersion, and if they were three times immersed it was answering in the discharge of this duty "somewhat more than the Lord prescribed in the Gospel;" or to translate *determinavit* more literally, "more than the Lord *determined*." Now, to *respond* is often simply *to do*, in a proper manner, that which has been determined that we shall do. And hence to *respond* somewhat more than the Lord *determined*, may be to be immersed three times instead of once. At best the matter is in serious doubt so far as its bearing in favor of the Apostolic origin of trine immersion is concerned; and it is possible that it is definite testimony against it. Of this we shall have more to say in the sequel.

A careful analysis of the testimony submitted will reveal the fact that the witnesses cited fall into three distinct periods. The historians, Sozomen (died A. D. 440), and Theodoret (died A. D. 457), delivered their testimony near the middle of the fifth century. The testimony of the Apostolic Canons, of Chrysostom (died 407), Augustine (died 430), Ambrose (died 397), Basil (died 372), and Cyril (died 386), was delivered near the close of the fourth century. Monulus testified before A. D. 258, and is to be classed with Clement (died 220), and Tertullian (died 220), whose testimony falls in the first quarter of the third century. And these last three are *Egyptian* witnesses, so that their testimony is not to be credited to the church at large. Hence, the witnesses decrease not only in numbers, but in the weight of their testimony and in geographical distribution as we ascend toward the period of the Apostolic Fathers and of the Apostles. This is a very significant fact, and possibly already indicates what may yet become an established fact, viz: That trine immersion is nothing more than a human innovation, based upon nebulous tradition, which originated in Egypt and was thence transferred to other countries.

Having furnished the requisite documentary evidence to establish the conceded proposition that trine immersion was practiced in the beginning of the third century, it is but the part of honesty to admit that the plain *inference* from said testimony is that the practice of a threefold immersion evidently *originated* somewhat earlier. How much earlier, where and by whom we may not be able positively to determine; but we hope to cast some light upon these points. We are now prepared to affirm,

THAT PRIOR TO THE YEAR A. D. 200, OR BEFORE THE TIME OF TERTULLIAN, THERE IS NOT A SINGLE WITNESS

CITED WHO TESTIFIES TO THE PRACTICE OF TRINE IMMERSION.

We establish this proposition with the tacit consent of our opponents. If there are earlier witnesses to this rite it is their duty to produce them. The interests of truth demand this of its advocates. But in this respect the friends of trine immersion have utterly failed of their duty if such witnesses can be found. They have advocated and defended, as well as practiced, trine immersion for a century and upwards; and yet in all that time they have been unable to find an older witness than Tertullian. We are not speaking at random. We have before us three of their publications bearing on this point, which sustain us in this statement. The most important one is entitled "*A Debate on Trine Immersion, the Lord's Supper, and Feet-Washing.*" The advocate and defender of trine immersion in this debate was Elder James Quinter, one of the ablest ministers of the German Baptist Church. He adduces historical testimony in favor of his first proposition—"Trine immersion is essential to Christian baptism." But he has no witness who lived before the time of Tertullian. According to Elder Quinter's own words, Tertullian simply testifies, upon his own personal knowledge, to the practice of trine immersion in his time, and says nothing of any earlier witnesses, so that there is not even an intimation of older witnesses.

We also have a smaller work from the pen of Elder Quinter, to which we have already had occasion to refer. It is entitled, "*The Origin of Single Immersion.*" Finding that single immersion was probably re-introduced in the early part of the fifth century by Eunomius, Elder Quinter assumes that trine immersion, which it supplanted, always existed prior to that date. There is no testimony whatever in

this publication to show that trine immersion was practiced before A. D. 200. The questions which the publication answers did not serve directly to call out such testimony.

Another work before us, and in which all the historical testimony to trine immersion prior to A. D. 400 should be cited, is also utterly devoid of all such testimony before the time of Tertullian. The title of this publication is "*Trine Immersion Traced to the Apostles.*" The author claims to have collected historical quotations from modern and ancient authors, proving that a threefold immersion was "*the only* method of baptizing ever practiced by the Apostles and their immediate successors." We have furnished our readers all the testimony which his book contains, and they have noticed that there is not a line of evidence from a single witness who lived before A. D. 200, or before Tertullian, who died A. D. 220. The author indeed quotes Justin Martyr, who died A. D. 165, and affirms that he has proved that Justin was baptized three times—by trine immersion. But *Justin does not say so*. His language is: "Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are regenerated by the same method of regeneration by which we were regenerated; for they are washed in the water in the name of God the Father, Lord of all things, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit." An advocate of single immersion, who believes in baptismal regeneration, would use similar language. Hence, the friends of trine immersion have failed to bring forward a single witness older than Tertullian, who can testify to the practice of trine immersion.

Our position, that there is no older witness for trine immersion than Tertullian, is also corroborated by the testimony of other eminent authorities. Dr. Philip Schaff, a

man of great learning, and an acknowledged authority on ecclesiastical history, says : “ The old practice of a three-fold immersion, *which is first mentioned by Tertullian*, is a venerable usage, but *cannot be traced to the Apostolic age.*” Robinson also speaks of trine immersion, but does not produce any older witness than Tertullian. The same is true of Bingham, one of the most eminent and reliable authors on Christian Antiquities. He fails to find a witness prior to A. D. 200. Dr. William Smith, in his justly celebrated work, “*A Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*,” also carries trine immersion back to Tertullian’s time, and cites him as a witness, and as the oldest witness, in favor of trine immersion.

In a work entitled “*A History of the Modes of Christian Baptism*,” by Rev. James Chrystal, A. M., we find additional confirmation of our position. Mr. Chrystal searched the “Holy Scriptures, the Councils, Ecumenical and Provincial, the Fathers, the Schoolmen, and the Rubrics of the whole Church East and West,” to determine the modes of baptism practiced in all ages of the Christian era. In Chapter VI, he treats “of the mode practiced by the church during the early centuries, and how far any mode was enjoined by the church, and of the penalties of violating or *changing* the mode.” The criteria by which he sought to determine these points were the Fathers, the Councils, ecumenical and provincial, and the baptismal offices of the church. For the first century he quotes Barnabas, Hermas, and St. Dionysius. The work of the latter does not belong to this century, as is every where conceded. Besides he quotes Justin Martyr, three in all, neither of which has a word to say in favor of trine immersion. He finds, therefore, no witness who can testify that trine immersion was practiced before the time of Tertullian. Could such a witness have

been found, Mr. Chrystal would unquestionably have produced him.

We consider the proposition, then, an established one, *that prior to the year A. D. 200, or before the time of Tertulian, there is not a single witness who testifies to the practice of trine immersion.* It is of special moment that this point should be definitely decided, and that the inquirer after truth and the right ways of the Lord should keep it clearly in his mind. The full force and significance of this fact can only be realized as the further progress of our investigation will bring out into bold relief several additional and cognate propositions. To these the following chapters will be devoted.



CHAPTER VI.

Testimony in favor of Immersion before A. D. 200.

WE have seen in the preceding chapter, that prior to A. D. 200 there is not a single witness to testify in favor of trine immersion. This fact would lose much of its decisive significance in either of two events.

First. If there were now no works extant of authors who wrote before Tertullian, except the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. The language of the latter is not decisive to those who believe in trine immersion. Indeed, as in the case of Monulus (A. D. 250), or of Chrysostom (A. D. 407), the modern defenders of trine immersion think they find ample warrant for it in the Commission (Matt. xxviii : 19, 20). Such, however, was not the case with Tertullian and others, as we shall see later. But it is not to be denied that our position would be sensibly weakened were no works now extant of authors who lived before Tertullian, except those of the Apostles and Evangelists. But, fortunately, this is not the case.

Second. Or again, our position would be less impregnable if the works of authors were now extant who lived before Tertullian, but if they made no reference at all to baptism. Their silence respecting this ordinance could not be construed as testimony against trine immersion. The

only ground for such an inference would be the fact that Tertullian, who was evidently familiar with these works, does not cite them in favor of trine immersion, though he seeks incidentally to defend it.

But, fortunately, neither of these two hypotheses is correct. Not only are the authentic and genuine remains of works older than Tertullian's now in our possession; but the authors thereof speak of baptism, and speak of it in such a way as to indicate, to our mind, that trine immersion had then not yet been introduced. In some instances they could not readily avoid testifying in favor of trine immersion had it then been in vogue. But, as already fully demonstrated, they are all totally silent touching *trine* immersion, but speak at some length of *immersion*.

Among the works that have come down to us from the first century of the Christian era are those of the Apostolic Fathers. It is of some importance at this point to fix definitely in our minds the correct meaning of the term *Apostolic Fathers*. We make a distinction between the *Apostolic Fathers* and the *Fathers of the Church*, fully aware, however, that temporal limits within which the *Fathers* are to be confined have long been points of grave discussion. For all practical purposes a clear definition is to be preferred, in a case like this, even to critical accuracy under the shadow of serious doubts. By the Fathers of the Church some mean the writers of the Christian church from the immediate post-Apostolic times down to the seventh century, and later. These ignore the distinction between *Fathers of the Church* and the *Apostolic Fathers*. This is a matter of some moment in a question like the one now before us. For without attempting to determine the degree of authority which may rightfully be attributed to the Fathers in this comprehensive sense, it must be

clearly evident that upon questions of Apostolic faith and practice the testimony of the latter far outweighs that of the former. This is self-evident upon a mere statement of the temporal limit which divides the two. The Apostolic Fathers are the writers of the church who were the immediate successors of the Apostles, while the Fathers of the Church are the leading writers of the church who were born after the close of the first century and down to A. D. 700, and later. Thus Dr. Hagenbach: 'The name *Patres Apostolici* is given to the Fathers of the first century, who, according to tradition, were disciples of the Apostles' (*Hist. of Doctrine, Vol. i, p. 64*). In the *Library of Universal Knowledge* we have the following definition of the term Apostolic Fathers: "The name given to the immediate disciples and fellow-laborers of the Apostles; and, in a more restricted sense, to those among them who had left writings behind them" (Vol. i, p. 563).

Hence, as we have seen what some of the *Fathers of the Church* have written concerning trine immersion, we now propose to inquire what the *Apostolic Fathers* wrote on the same subject. Who are the Apostolic Fathers? We answer, Barnabas, Hermas, Clement of Rome, Ignatius and Polycarp. In the writings of at least three of these the subject of baptism is introduced, while in the case of Polycarp we have the testimony of Irenæus, his faithful and zealous disciple. We shall take up their testimony briefly in the order in which we have named them.

BARNABAS.—He was a Levite from Cyprus, who very early joined the church at Jerusalem, where he was known as *Joses* (Acts iv: 36). He consecrated his earthly possessions to the needs of the church (Acts iv: 37). He was afterwards associated for a time with the Apostle Paul (Acts ix: 27). Eusebius says he was one of the seventy disciples.

In what is known as "The General Epistle of Barnabas," he speaks at some length of baptism. In the tenth and eleventh chapters he "spiritually allegorises" the commands of Moses on certain points, showing that baptism and the cross of Christ were foretold in figures under the law. He speaks definitely and specifically of immersion, but not a word of *triple* immersion. His words are as follows: "Consider how he has joined both the cross and the water together. For this he saith: Blessed are they who put their trust in the cross, descend into the water, for they shall have their reward in due time; then, saith he, I will give it them. * * And there was a river running on the right hand, and beautiful trees grew up by it; and he that shall eat of them shall live forever. The signification of which is this: That we go down into the water full of sins and pollution, but come up again bringing forth fruit; having in our hearts the fear and hope which is in Jesus, by the Spirit." Barnabas had the occasion and the spirit to enlarge on the *threefold* immersion if it had been practiced in his time; but he is significantly silent on that point.

HERMAS.—The next one of the Apostolic Fathers whom we propose to interrogate on this subject is Hermas. He was a member of the church at Rome at the time at which Paul wrote his Epistle to the Romans (Rom. xvi: 14). He is the author of a work which has come down to us, entitled "The Shepherd of Hermas." The book is divided into three parts, under the respective heads of VISIONS, COMMANDS, and SIMILITUDES. It was in such high repute in the early history of the church that it was quoted by some under the very name of Scripture, as by Irenæus; or as divinely inspired, as by Origen. Even where it was not accepted as canonical it was publicly read in the churches, and the Fathers appointed it to be read for di-

rection and confirmation in faith and piety. Both in the **COMMANDS** and in the **SIMILITUDES** Hermas speaks of baptism—of immersion—but in neither does he make the remotest reference to a triple immersion. In the **COMMANDS** he says: “And I said unto him, ‘I have even now heard from certain teachers that there is no other repentance besides that of baptism; when we go down into the water and receive the forgiveness of our sins’” (*Commands* iv: 3, Archbishop Wake’s Trans.). In the **SIMILITUDES** he says: “Before a man receives the name of the Son of God, he is ordained unto death; but when he receives that seal, he is freed from death, and assigned unto life. Now that seal is the water of baptism, into which men go down under the obligation unto death, but come up appointed unto life” (*Similitude* ix: 16, Archbishop Wake’s Trans.). Here, then, is not a word about trine immersion, nor anywhere else where reference is made to baptism. This fact is well known to the advocates of trine immersion, as is evident from the fact that they never quote Hermas. Mr. Chrystal in his excellent *History of the Modes of Baptism* concedes that Hermas does not testify to trine immersion. In considering objections to the Apostolic practice of trine immersion he has the following:

“Obj. 2. But the passages quoted from Barnabas, Hermas and Justin Martyr state only the fact of being immersed or baptized, but do not specify further.”

In his answer to this objection he fully acknowledges its correctness as a matter of fact, though he controverts the inference drawn therefrom, that “we should most naturally understand these testimonies of single” immersion. According to Hermas, even the Old Testament saints and patriarchs had to be baptized by the Apostles in *hades* before they could enjoy the blessings of the kingdom. But it is

strange, indeed, that he should deem it important to state this fact, of no practical moment except to enforce the essentiality of baptism; and yet neglect to teach them the threefold immersion upon which the validity of baptism is supposed to depend. We must hence ask the right to dissent from Mr. Chrystal's conclusion on this point, and accept Hermas as a witness against trine immersion.

CLEMENT OF ROME.—The next in the order in which we have named the Apostolic Fathers is *Clemens Romanus*, mentioned in Paul's Epistle to the Philippians, iv: 3. But, as there is no clearly defined reference in his Epistles now extant to the subject of baptism, we need not enlarge upon his character and history.

IGNATIUS.—It is alleged that Ignatius was Bishop of Antioch as early as A. D. 69. He is recognized as a disciple of the Apostle John. He bore the surname of *Theophoros*; that is, one who carries God (Christ) in his heart. A tradition says he was the little child whom Jesus set in the midst of his Disciples, and accordingly Jerome interprets his surname to mean "one who was carried by God" (Christ). During the persecution under Trajan, on account of his steadfast confession of Christ, Ignatius was carried to Rome, where, in A. D. 107 (or according to some, A. D. 115 or 116), he was thrown to the lions in the Colosseum for the delectation of the people. We have seven Epistles bearing his name, the genuineness of which is generally conceded. They are said to have been composed on his way to a martyr's death, and are full of tender feeling. In at least three of these Epistles Ignatius refers to baptism, in the one even speaking of it as the "one baptism;" yet he does not hint at a threefold immersion. But if triple baptism was then practiced; and if Christ was thus baptized, it is difficult to account for this silence, especially as Igna-

tius mentions Christ's baptism in his Epistle to the Smyrnæans.

POLYCARP.—The last-named of the Apostolic Fathers is Polycarp. He was Bishop of Smyrna when Ignatius sent his Epistle to that church, as well as one to Polycarp himself, which is addressed "to Polycarp, Bishop of the Church which is at Smyrna." He was one of the most illustrious of the early Christian martyrs. His martyrdom occurred under the Emperor Marcus Aurelius. Irenæus states that Polycarp was taught the doctrines of Christianity by the Apostles, particularly by John, with whom he had familiar intercourse. Only one of his Epistles is preserved, addressed to the Philippians, and in it there is no reference to baptism. But, for two reasons, we accept him as a silent witness against trine immersion.

First. As Bishop of the church at Smyrna his doctrine touching baptism would agree with that of the Epistle of Ignatius addressed to said church. This Epistle speaks of baptism, but fails to say a word in favor of a triple baptism. Ignatius also addressed an Epistle to Polycarp while the latter was Bishop of Smyrna, in which he speaks of baptism without a word of a threefold immersion. This repeated mention of baptism without any allusion to three immersions indicates an efficient cause for the silence.

Second. The silence of Irenæus on trine immersion (of which we shall have more to say presently) is another indication that Polycarp did not teach and practice it. Irenæus was the pupil of Polycarp, and a faithful disciple. He speaks admiringly of his teacher, saying, "I can tell also the very place where the blessed Polycarp was accustomed to sit and discourse; and also his entrance, his walks, the complexion of his life, and the form of his body, and his conversations with his people, and his familiar in-

tercourse with John, as he was accustomed to tell, and also his familiarity with those that had seen the Lord. Also concerning his miracles, *his doctrines*; all these were told by Polycarp in consistency with the Holy Scriptures." And yet Irenæus, in his extant writings, fails to testify to the practice of a threefold baptism, though, as we shall see, he speaks of baptism in such connections as to make a reference to trine immersion, if it had been practiced, in every way natural and to be expected. For these reasons we count Polycarp with the other Apostolic Fathers as silent on trine immersion. The silence of all these Fathers touching trine immersion is certainly quite singular, except upon the supposition that it was not practiced until a later period. This we believe to be the truth.



CHAPTER VII.

From the Apostolic Fathers to Tertullian.

WE have seen with what unanimity the Apostolic Fathers testify to the practice of *immersion* in their time, and also the silence which they invariably maintain touching *trine* immersion. These Fathers belong to the first century of the Christian church. There yet remains a period of nearly one hundred years to the time of Tertullian, when *trine* immersion finds the first historic mention. It will therefore prove of interest and moment to examine the testimony of the immediate disciples and companions of the Apostolic Fathers in order to secure their testimony on the question at issue. We have stated in general terms that not one of them testifies in favor of *trine* immersion, a fact which is evident from the failure on the part of the friends of *trine* immersion to produce testimony to that effect from their writings, as well as from the concurrent statements of church historians and paleographers. It may, however, serve to intensify the importance of this statement to enumerate briefly the Fathers who lived and wrote between A. D. 100 and the time when Tertullian probably wrote his works. Of these

there are at least six, fragments of whose writings have come down to the present time. Not one of them speaks of trine immersion.

The first of these Fathers is Papias. He was Bishop of Hierapolis, in Phrygia, in the first half of the second century. By some he is counted as one of the Apostolic Fathers, and according to Guericke "not without right." Irenæus represents him as a pupil of the Apostle John, although he does not himself advance such a claim. He was, however, an associate of Polycarp, and Bishop in the same province of proconsular Asia. There is nothing in the fragments of his writings on trine immersion.

The testimony of Justin Martyr is of great importance in this connection. He was born about A. D. 89. He was a native of Sychem, in Samaria. Born a heathen, he was converted to Christianity when about thirty-five years of age. He was a Christian philosopher, not a bishop. He wrote several important works, which have escaped the ravages of time. He is the recognized link between the Apostolic Fathers and the more distinct periods of the early church. In his *Apology* I, chap. 61, he contrasts regeneration by the baptismal water with natural birth. He says: "But we will also describe the manner in which we consecrate ourselves to God, having been made new by Christ, that we may not seem, by omitting this, to deal dishonestly in our exposition. As many as are convinced and believe those things that are taught and said by us to be true, and as a promise that they are able to live thus, are taught to pray and to ask of God with fasting the forgiveness of their former sins, we ourselves praying and fasting with them. Thereupon they are led by us where there is water, and are regenerated by the same method of regeneration with which we also ourselves were regenera-

ted; for in the name of God, the Father of all and Lord, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, they then receive the bath in water." Further on he says: "The name of God, the Father and Lord of the Universe, is pronounced over him who is willing to be born again, and hath repented of his sins; he who leads him to be washed [or bathed] in the laver of baptism saying this only over him." In his *Dialogue with Tryphon, the Jew*, the contrast between baptism and Jewish lustrations is urged. Yet in all this discussion of baptism in these two works there is not once an intimation of a threefold immersion.

Tatian was a disciple of Justin Martyr. He is also the author of a work called *Apology*, written before the death of Justin. But no trace appears in this work of either the doctrine or practice of trine immersion. The same may be said of *Athenagoras*, the Athenian.

Another of the intermediate Fathers, whose writings have been at least in part preserved, is *Theophilus*, bishop of Antioch. He speaks of baptism in a work against Autolycus, entitled "*Concerning the Faith of the Christians*." He applies the blessing God pronounced on the fifth day of the work of creation upon the creatures which the waters brought forth to the water used in baptism (*Ad. Ant.* II, 16). But while he dwells particularly on this point, he does not, in any manner, as much as intimate a triple immersion.

The last of the intermediate Fathers before Tertullian, whose writings have been preserved, is Irenæus, to whom we referred above. He was a disciple of Polycarp and bishop of Lyons. He is pronounced "a clear-headed, considerate, philosophical theologian." His principal work was written against the Gnostics, and is extant. In this he speaks of baptism as follows: "As dough cannot be made of dry flour without the addition of some fluid, so we, the

many, cannot be united in one body in Christ without the cement of water which comes down from heaven; and as the earth is quickened and rendered fruitful by dew and rain, so Christianity by the heavenly water," &c. In another work (*Against Heresies*) he says: "Our bodies through this bath [*lavacrum*] have received that which leads to an incorruptible unity." In another fragment he says concerning Naaman: "He dipped in Jordan seven times. Not in vain in old time was Naaman, being a leper, baptized and cleansed, but for our information, who, being lepers in our sins, are cleansed by the holy water and invocation of the Lord from our old transgressions, as new-born children spiritually regenerated." It would have been in point for Irenæus to have said that in baptism Christians are dipped three times, had that been the practice. However, he makes no mention of a threefold immersion, and thus by his silence unites with the other Fathers of that period, and with the Apostolic Fathers, in virtually testifying against it. This seems the more natural conclusion when we remember how common it was to speak of "descending three times into the water," and to use similar expressions, in the fourth century. Also when the fact is emphasized that these earlier writers, like the later ones, speak of "one baptism," as in the Epistle of Ignatius to the Philadelphians, chap. IV, but never deem it necessary to add, "in three immersions," as was done by Monulus, Chrysostom and others.

If now we should open the New Testament, after this silence of two centuries concerning trine immersion, could we expect to hear anything there with reference to it? The New Testament is our ultimate authority, and it has been searched in vain for any testimony in favor of this practice of antiquity. And yet there are instances in which a state-

ment of a threefold baptism would have been quite natural, not to say necessary, in order to avoid misunderstanding. Yet nearly every case in which baptism is in anywise mentioned a single immersion is implied; and those which do not, also do not necessarily imply three immersions. If we put the word *immerse* in its various forms in place of *baptize* this fact will become more apparent. We shall find no such peculiar expression as "one baptism in three immersions." The sacred historian says of Jesus that when he was immersed he went up out of the water. Immersed how often? One time. He himself said: "He that believeth and is immersed shall be saved." In this instance especially would we look for the number of times a man must be immersed, since, according to later testimony, three immersions are necessary to the validity of Christian baptism. Paul says: "There is one body * * * one Lord, one faith, one baptism" [immersion]. If there is more than one immersion this was one of the places in which the fact should not have been concealed. Indeed, we need not hesitate to say that the New Testament not only knows nothing about trine immersion, but that it is so written that from its pages alone every unbiased reader would be led to conclude that single immersion is the baptism therein taught. There is nothing in all its pages to the contrary, but many things which it is difficult to account for upon any other supposition than that single immersion is of Divine origin.

As we go back to the period before the Commission this supposition is strengthened. The baptism of John was not a threefold immersion. We are not aware that it has ever been so claimed. Those who believe in the existence of Proselyte baptism have never contended for trine immersion among the Jews. Then there would have been no

propriety in a formula such as the Fathers used in baptizing converts, and which many claim requires a triple immersion. Then, in place of the frequentative *baptizo*, according to some modern writers, we should find the Hebrew non-frequentative *tahval*, or its Aramaic equivalent. But if among the Jews there was no threefold immersion practiced (though we do not concede that Proselyte baptism was practiced before John's time), and if the baptism of John the Baptist was by a single immersion, we have good reason to expect some definite mention of a change to three immersions. But there is no such mention in the New Testament.

Besides, it is generally conceded that during the time of the Apostles, as well as in the earliest post-Apostolic times, baptism was administered in the name of Jesus. Neander, the prince of modern ecclesiastical historians, says that the formula of baptism which is regarded as the older is the "shorter one which refers only to Christ, to which there is allusion in the New Testament." Dr. Hare also says in his *Church History*: "Baptism as an initiatory rite was performed simply in the name of Jesus" (*Apostolic Church*). Robinson, in his *History of Baptism*, says: "There is no mention of baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost in immediately post-Apostolic times." Dr. William Smith states the same fact in his *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*. This testimony, of a negative character, certainly becomes very strong and significant in view of the fact that Peter enjoined baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ" (Acts ii: 38); that when Philip preached in Samaria, to which place Peter and John were sent upon hearing "that Samaria had received the word of God," those who believed "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii: 5-16); and that under the in-

structions of Paul those who had been baptized "unto John's baptism" were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix: 3-5).

Now, a historical retrospect reveals the following peculiar facts:

1. In the latter part of the fourth century nearly every author who refers to baptism speaks of the triple immersion.

2. At the close of the third century the witnesses are less numerous, though the threefold immersion was evidently widely practiced.

3. At the opening of the third century there are but two witnesses who testify to the practice of trine immersion.

4. In the second century there are various works extant which speak in greater or less detail of baptism, but not one author mentions trine immersion.

5. The Apostolic Fathers, the immediate disciples of the Apostles, though the majority of them speak of *immersion*, not one of them mentions *trine* immersion.

6. The inspired historian mentions Peter, Philip and Paul as baptizing in the name of Jesus only, whereas the threefold immersion is never in the name of Jesus alone until after the fourth century.

7. That there is no claim advanced in favor of trine immersion before the crucifixion of Christ, neither in Christ's baptism, that of John, nor in the Proselyte baptism of the Jews, if there was such baptism.

8. That there is no mention or intimation of a change from single to trine immersion in the Scriptures, but ample reasons in favor of a uniform practice from John the Baptist to John the Apostle. This significant array of adverse facts should be sufficient to produce the most serious doubt touching the divine origin of trine immersion.

CHAPTER VIII.

Trine Immersion based on Tradition.

WE have in the previous chapter given ample proof of the total want of documentary evidence, prior to the time of Tertullian, in favor of trine immersion. It might still not be perfectly safe to conclude that this mode of baptism rests exclusively upon tradition. The documentary evidence might be lost. We hence propose to show further that the weight of testimony, even in the times when trine immersion was so widely practiced, is in favor of its traditionary origin.

A clear and distinct understanding of terms is one of the first requisites in all discussions. We should, therefore, first of all know what is meant by the word *tradition*; and especially that we clearly perceive the import of the term *Apostolic tradition*. The Greek verb *paradidonai* and the Latin verb *tradere* are synonymous. Their general meaning is to deliver from one to another, to transmit; or, as Dr. Hinsdale has defined the conjugate nouns, "the act of giving up, *handing down*, transmitting" (*Tradition*, p. 10). The instrument of transmission is oral language. Hence Webster's definition of *tradition*: "The unwritten or oral delivery of opinions, doctrines, practices, rites, and customs

from father to son, or from ancestors to posterity; the transmission of any opinions or practices from forefathers to descendants by oral communication, without written memorials."

Apostolic tradition is commonly regarded as the oral deliverances of the Apostles *contained in the writings of the Fathers*. But what is peculiar about the tradition concerning trine immersion, the baptism of infants, etc., is that the Apostolic Fathers have no record of any such tradition. Hence, if we were to adhere to the first principle laid down by the Reformers as a body, even in a slightly modified sense, we could have no ground upon which to base trine immersion. They held that the word of God alone, by which they meant the written word or the Scriptures, could safely be accepted as a rule of faith. If the Fathers could be received at all, it is only in the light of witnesses, and fallible witnesses, to the interpretation of the Scriptures. We regard this as a sound principle. But judged by it, trine immersion must fall, since the Apostolic Fathers do not even appear as witnesses in favor of the interpretation of Scripture to sustain trine immersion.

That we are not unsupported in the positive affirmation which we have made, that trine immersion rests wholly on tradition, will appear evident from quotations made from several eminent authors. Dr. Schaff, a man of great learning and an acknowledged authority on ecclesiastical history, says: "The old practice of a threefold immersion, *which is first mentioned by Tertullian*, is a venerable usage, but cannot be traced to the Apostolic age." Robinson says: "Trine immersion is of uncertain origin." Bingham, one of our best authorities on Christian antiquities, says: "Some [among ancient authors] derive it from Apostolic *tradition*, others from the first institution of baptism by our

Savior, while *others* esteem it only an indifferent circumstance or ceremony, that may be used or omitted without any detriment to the sacrament itself, or breach of Divine appointment." Mr. Chrystal, in his *History of the Modes of Baptism*, quotes some of the Fathers of the Church whose testimony, he states, indicates "that the *number* of immersions had come down by tradition." But he is equally positive that they do "not mean also that *immersion* itself did."

But these modern authors must derive their knowledge on this subject from works which have come down to us from the Fathers. We can therefore accept their testimony only when sustained by the proper documents, and as a confirmation of our interpretation of the terms of these documents. What we demand of others we cannot be slow to furnish ourselves. We hence produce the necessary testimony to show that anciently trine immersion was based (1) upon constructions of the text of Scripture; and (2) upon tradition.

Theodoret speaks of "the law of holy baptism which had been *handed down* from the beginning from the Lord, and from the Apostles." Sozomen to the same effect, but in different and plainer terms, speaks of corrupting "the *tradition* that has been *handed down* from the Apostles." It will be noticed that both these authors, according to the translator, employ the very words by which Dr. Hinsdale defines tradition—" *handing down*."

Jerome (died A. D. 420), a cotemporary of Chrysostom, Basil and others quoted in previous chapters, confirms the testimony of Sozomen. He rendered immense service to biblical criticism and exegesis; but he does not find any basis for trine immersion in the word, nor in the writings of the Apostolic Fathers. His testimony is as follows:

“Many *other* things which are observed by *tradition* in the churches *have acquired the authority of written law*, as, for instance, to immerse the head thrice in the laver” (*Adv. Lucif.*, chap. IV).

Basil (died A. D. 379) furnishes strong testimony for our position. With others of the Fathers of the Church he speaks of immersion as having been established as an ordinance by the Lord, but that *trine* immersion was derived through tradition. Thus he says: “There is but one death for the world and one resurrection from the dead, of both which baptism [or immersion, as Chrystal renders it, an advocate of trine immersion] is a type. Therefore has the Lord, the dispenser of life, *established* the rite of baptism [immersion—Chrystal] for us, that it might afford a figure of death and life.” But when he refers to the three-fold baptism, or triple immersion, he states that it was derived through tradition (*De Spirit. Sanct.*, c. XXVII).

We have other witnesses to the same effect, but we do not deem it necessary to cite them all. There is one more, however, whose testimony it is needful to examine, as great reliance is placed upon what he says by those who advocate and practice trine immersion. We refer to Tertullian, who first mentions this mode of baptism. Our opponents contend that Tertullian does not say that in being “immersed three times [we] fulfill somewhat more than our Lord has declared in the Gospel.” Mr. Chrystal contends “that Tertullian believed that all the baptisms of the New Testament performed *after* the words of the Commission were uttered, were performed by trine immersion,” and “that he believed that Christ enjoined this mode” (*Hist. Modes of Bap.*, p. 62). On the contrary, we have been led to believe that Tertullian intimates that it is of human origin in his belief when he says: “Then we are three

times immersed, answering [or fulfilling] somewhat more than the Lord prescribed in the Gospel." This is Dr. Conant's translation, who is fully able to determine the meaning of Tertullian's words. And as quoted by Dr. Wall, Tertullian distinctly admits that the practice of trine immersion is without scriptural authority. He argues in favor of it precisely upon the same ground that he argues for other practices not of Apostolic origin; that is, uninspired tradition. An examination of his testimony will, we think, make this clear. The eleventh volume of the Ante-Nicene Library contains the first volume of the writings of Tertullian. The thirteenth division of this volume gives us the treatise entitled *De Corona*, important in its bearings both upon morals and doctrine. The very object of this treatise is to show that it is lawful to do things religiously which are not commanded in the Scriptures. Thus in the first paragraph he says: "But now, as they put forth also the objection: 'But where are we *forbidden* to be crowned?' I shall take this point up as more suitable to be treated of here, being *the essence* in fact of the present contention" (*Ante-Nicene Lib.*, Vol. XI, p. 334). In the second paragraph he says: "Consider, then, whence the *custom* about which we are now chiefly inquiring got its authority." He admits that his opponents demand scriptural authority for the custom he was advocating, and he retorts: "Indeed, in urgently demanding the warrant of Scripture in a *different side from their own* [of their opponents] men prejudice that the support of Scripture ought no less to appear on their part" (*Ibid*, p. 335). But in these mutual demands for Scripture authority no progress can be made toward a solution. There must be a different principle of adjustment laid down, Tertullian would say. Hence in the third paragraph he says: "And

how long shall we draw the saw to and fro through this line [of each demanding Scripture of the other], when we have an ancient practice, which by anticipation has made for us the state [of the question]. *If no passage of Scripture has prescribed it, assuredly custom, which without doubt flowed from tradition, has confirmed it*" (Ibid, p. 336). But his opponents were not yet satisfied, for he proceeds: "Even in pleading *tradition*, written authority, you say, must be demanded" (Ibid, p. 336). This he controverts. He declares that their practice in other respects shows that tradition, without written authority, is sufficient: "Certainly we shall say that it ought not to be admitted, *if no case of other practices* which, without any written instrument, *we maintain on the ground of tradition alone*" (Ibid, p. 336). In other words, if you deny us the right to observe certain practices upon tradition alone, then you must deny the right to all others. Then he brings forward certain matters based upon tradition, but which his opponents observed, saying: "To deal with this matter briefly, I shall begin with baptism. When we are going to enter the water, but a little before, in the presence of the congregation and under the hand of the president, we solemnly profess that we disown the devil, and his pomp, and his angels. Hereupon we are thrice immersed, making a somewhat ampler pledge than the Lord has appointed in the gospel. Then, when we are taken up [as new-born children], we taste first of all a mixture of milk and honey, and from that day we refrain from the daily bath for a whole week. We take also, in meetings before daybreak, and from the hand of none but the presidents, the sacrament of the Eucharist, which the Lord both commanded to be eaten at meal-times, and enjoined to be taken by all [alike]. As often as the anniversary comes round, we make offerings for the dead

as birthday honors. We count fasting, or kneeling in worship on the Lord's day, unlawful" (Ibid, p. 336). The following paragraph, referring to these practices, opens thus: "If, *for these* and other such rules, you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, *you will find none*. Tradition will be held forth to you as the originator of them, custom as their strengthener, and faith as their observer" (Ibid, p. 337).

Trine immersion is introduced only in this connection, where Tertullian is speaking of practices for which "you will find no Scripture injunction." He also wrote a treatise (*De Baptismo*) on baptism, but he nowhere therein refers to the triple immersion. We have here a definite and positive reason for holding that Tertullian, the first to mention trine immersion, classes it among those practices for which if "you insist upon having positive Scripture injunction, you will find none." Hence, also, he further says: "These instances, therefore, will make it sufficiently plain that you can vindicate the keeping of even unwritten tradition when it has been established by custom" (Ibid, p. 337).

Others refer to the Commission in confirmation of the practice of trine immersion as of divine origin. This is the case with Monulus, A. D. 256, and Chrysostom, A. D. 400. But this is in no way reliable, and serves more as evidence that there was no early documentary proof of the practice.

Concerning tradition as a valid ground for the practice of any rite, little need be said to the student of ancient ecclesiastical history. It is worthless for the purpose of establishing the Apostolic origin of any doctrine or practice. Indeed, it is rather good evidence to the contrary. The learned and acute Neander saw this, and hesitated not to avow it. Speaking of infant baptism he says: "We have all reason for not deriving infant baptism from Apostolic

institution; and the recognition of which followed somewhat later, *as an Apostolical tradition, serves to confirm this hypothesis.*"

Besides, no reliance is to be placed upon the claims of a practice based upon even so-called Apostolic tradition. That many customs and practices in the second, third and fourth centuries laid claim to the authority of the Apostles and Apostolic tradition, without a particle of evidence, is well known. Tradition, in these respects, has proved itself proverbially unreliable. Then, it is well-known that the term *Apostle*, as used by the Fathers of the Church, was not as definitely restricted as it now is. Thus Canon Farrar speaks of the "wider sense of the word *Apostle*," as used in the writings of the early church (*Early Days of Christianity*, p. 46). Clemens Alexandrinus (died A. D. 220) calls Clement of Rome an Apostle, and Jerome says he was an Apostolical man. Accordingly, also, many things were reputed as scriptural which are not found in the accepted canon of the New Testament. Almost the entire Apocrypha was accepted as Scripture by some writers. Irenæus expressly quotes the Shepherd of Hermas under the very name of Scripture.

It is, hence, sufficient reason for the rejection of a practice when we can find no better authority for it than can be produced in favor of trine immersion. It has been conclusively established that it rests wholly on tradition, and that even no record of it as a tradition can be found before the time of Tertullian. This is a notable fact. The institution of baptism is well authenticated. It rests directly upon the divine command, and is confirmed by an unbroken practice in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic periods. That baptism and immersion are synonymous is also abundantly verified, and that this was the practice of the Apostles and

Fathers is not subject to reasonable doubt. Why, then, should the threefold immersion fail to be recorded in a solitary instance before the close of the second century, if baptism was thus administered? And why should we then meet it in an apologetic attitude, begging for quarters because other practices, without divine or Apostolic warrant, were observed? Why should we then for the first time find even a record of the tradition upon whose authority alone it survived? Were there the least warrant for it in the word of God we should joyfully accept it, for that word is the supreme law of the Christian. But as there is no authority for it in God's book we are bound to reject it as of human origin.



CHAPTER IX.

The Innovations based on Tradition.

FAMILIAR mainly with ecclesiastical history of the present time, the accuracy with which dates and events are recorded and preserved, and the tenacity with which established usages are maintained, the change from single to trine immersion as early as A. D. 220 seems to many almost incredible. How could such an innovation become established? That this is possible, not to say natural, seems evident upon a somewhat careful investigation. This is so generally conceded, in the abstract, that no cautious critic of the present age would feel safe to trust to tradition in the absence of Scripture testimony. Nothing is clearer to men thoroughly conversant with ancient ecclesiastical history than that *the existence of a practice, or the belief of a doctrine, one, two or three centuries after the days of the Apostles, is no proof whatever that it was instituted by Christ or taught and practiced by the Apostles.* The reason for this principle must be evident. Great changes in doctrine, practice and polity took place within almost hearing distance of the Apostles. To this effect it is not difficult to cite a large number of authorities. Dr. Miller, whose learning and integrity as a church historian cannot

be called in question, says: "Before the *close* of the second century the scene began to change, and before the *commencement* of the fourth, a deplorable corruption of doctrines, discipline and morals had crept into the church and disfigured the body of Christ." Hegesippus, the earliest of the post-Apostolic Christian church historians, born at the beginning of the second century and died about A. D. 180, declares that the "virgin purity of the church was confined to the Apostles." Irenæus even speaks of Simon Magus, mentioned in the New Testament, as the "author of all heresies." He was himself the founder of a sect, though recognized in the New Testament rather as a man of immoral character, but not as a heretic (Acts viii). President Hinsdale, of Hiram College, Ohio, speaking of *Human Tradition*, says: "Many innovations in the doctrine and polity of the church are traceable to the second and third centuries" (*Eccl. Tradition*, p. 28). Again, he says: "Doctrines and rites unknown to the Apostles, but invented by men, in continually increasing numbers, were receiving recognition in the church" (*Ibid*, p. 47).

These innovations and errors of doctrine were almost invariably based on tradition, though sometimes they claimed the direct and written authority of the Apostles. The circumstances were all favorable for the introduction of innovations in practice and heresies in doctrine. Their very multiplicity, and variety, and want of harmony with divinely delivered doctrines and rites, increase the probability of a departure in the case of baptism from the extreme simplicity of the first institution. And then, too, it is not to be overlooked that this threefold immersion into "the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit," has the appearance of an amendment. Under the most famous of all canons of criticism, "to choose the

harder reading" where there are various readings, this practically amended reading of the Commission becomes increasingly suspicious. It looks like an after-thought, to conform the practice to a supposed necessity of the sacred text.

But let us instance some of the innovations which came into the church about the time, or before the time, that we find trine immersion first mentioned. By comparison we shall be able readily to see that there is nothing peculiar in the fact that trine immersion should be introduced into the church without a shadow of Divine or Apostolic authority. We have seen that Tertullian is the first to mention trine immersion. He died A. D. 220, and his works were principally written in the closing decade of his life. According to his testimony there were those in his day who utterly rejected baptism. In his treatise *De Baptismo*, chapter I, he says: "The consequence is, that a viper of the Cainite heresy, lately conversant in this quarter, has carried away a great number with her most venomous doctrine, making it her first aim to destroy baptism" (*Ante-Nicene Library*, Vol. XI, p. 231). Again he testifies that these rejecters of baptism argued in favor of their position from the fact that Christ did not baptize (*Ibid*, p. 244); and "that the Apostles were not bapitized" (*Ibid*, p. 245), adding the following: "Here, then, those miscreants provoke questions. And so they say: 'Baptism is not necessary for them to whom faith is sufficient; for withal, Abraham pleased God by a sacrament of no water, but of faith'" (*Ibid*, p. 247). Again he says: "But they roll back [upon us an objection] from [that] Apostle [Paul] himself, in that he said: 'For Christ sent me not to baptize'; as if by this argument baptism were done away" (*Ibid*, 248).

These believed, not simply upon *tradition*, but upon *Apostolic authority*, that *ritual* baptism was no longer required.

But this erroneous doctrine, so sharply repudiated by Tertullian, was not as new as one might suppose from his writings. It had just been introduced in Africa, but in other parts it had been preached at an earlier date. Thus Irenæus, who died about twenty years before Tertullian, speaking of some of the heretical Valentinian Gnostics says: "Some of them say that it is needless to bring the person to the water at all" (*Studies on the Baptismal Question*, p. 267). That is, they did not regard it needful to baptize their converts. From the testimony of the same author we learn that others of the Gnostics had a substitute for baptism in the form of an unguent made of "a mixture of oil and water" (Ibid, p. 267). In this way innovations were introduced in one part of the church, in some instances, long before they were received elsewhere. And this does not appear singular when the facts are fully known touching the formation of the Canon of the New Testament Scriptures. The facilities for detecting and exposing errors and innovations which we now possess did not then exist. It was not uncommon for some of these parties in the church to reject large portions of the present New Testament, and even to go so far as to repudiate the Apostle Paul, as the Elcesaites and Ebionites did; or to stigmatize him as a heretic, as others did. Indeed, it was not a determined question as to what the Canon of the New Testament Scriptures really is until after the close of the third century. Some portions of the church had nothing of our present New Testament except a "corrupted recension of the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew." Practices and doctrines hence became current in some localities whence they were carried to others as Apostolic and accepted as such.

One of the most serious departures from scriptural practices found in the patristic period is that of infant baptism. Trine immersion was a harmless innovation and an indifferent modification of an established rite compared with an entire and essential change of the subjects of the rite. And yet this change was partly effected at quite as early a date as the first recorded testimony for triple immersion. And a persistent effort was made even then to base it upon Apostolic teaching and practice. Texts of Scripture were quoted showing that infant baptism was an Apostolic usage; and that, too, by the same authors who testify in favor of trine immersion, but who base it most generally upon tradition. Tertullian is said to have first written about infant baptism. So Venema testifies. He says: "Nothing can be affirmed with certainty concerning the custom of the church before Tertullian, seeing there is not anywhere, in more ancient writers, that I know of, undoubted mention of infant baptism." Pengilly positively states that the passage to which Venema alludes, contains "the first mention of infant baptism" (*Guide to Baptism*, p. 65). The mention of infant baptism by Tertullian occurs in his work entitled *De Baptismo*, which is supposed to have been written A. D. 204. We concede that this, so far as *terms* are concerned, is correct; but Venema's cautious statement: "Nothing can be affirmed *with certainty*"—is better. For it is in dispute whether Irenæus, who wrote a little earlier than Tertullian, mentions infant baptism. Among the terms used in the primitive church to designate baptism, in addition to *baptizein* and derived words, were *laver*, *font*, *regeneration*, *seal*, *illumination*, etc. It is hence not uncommon for patristic writers to speak of those who were baptized as having been regenerated—born again. Tertullian does this frequently, as well as other writers of his time

(Trench's *Synonyms* of N. T. ; Tertullian *de Baptismo, et al.*). Irenæus in his book against *Heresies* (*lib. III, cap. 39 al. 22,*) says that our "Lord came (into the world) in order that through himself he might save all men, *infants*, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elders, even all who through him are *regenerated* (born again) unto God." Dr. William Smith says: "No unprejudiced interpreter acquainted with the forms of speech habitually employed by Irenæus himself, and by the early Fathers generally, will doubt that when Irenæus thus speaks of infants and little ones, as well as others of more mature age, being 'born again unto God,' he refers to the fact of their being baptized" (*Dict. Chr. Ant.*, Vol. I, p. 169). We do not propose to decide this question, although we have no doubt that the preponderance of probabilities seems to favor Dr. Smith's positive opinion.

Evidently our trine immersion friends must agree with Dr. Smith, and hold that "no unprejudiced interpreter acquainted with the forms of speech habitually employed by Irenæus himself, and by the early Fathers generally, will doubt that when Irenæus thus speaks of infants and little ones, as well as others of more mature age, being 'born again unto God,' he refers to the fact of their being *baptized*." To be consistent they cannot avoid this. They quote Justin, who died about twenty-five years before Irenæus, which they translate as follows: "Then we bring them to some place where there is water, and they are *baptized* by the same way of *baptism* by which we were *baptized*" (*Trine Im. traced to the Apost.*, p. 26). But Justin did not use the word *baptize*, but the word *regenerate*. If *regenerate* means *baptism* in the writings of Justin, who died 176, because it is supposed to have a favorable bearing on *trine* immersion, why does it not also mean *baptism*

in the writings of Irenæus, who died A. D. 202? The simple fact that the latter refers to infants is, in itself, no reason for insisting that it does not mean baptism; and more especially so when we know that inside of twenty years after his death infant baptism is acknowledged to have been practiced. We are as ready to believe that the one speaks of baptism as the other; but unfortunately for the advocates of trine immersion, Irenæus then clearly testifies to infant baptism, but Justin does not so clearly speak of triple immersion. For to be "regenerated by the same method of regeneration with which we also ourselves were regenerated" is an expression every way consistent with single immersion. We are hence forced to the conclusion that if there is ample ground in patristic testimony to justify the church in the practice of *triple* immersion, so is there, also, ample ground to justify it in the practice of *infant* immersion. We reject both, neither for want of patristic evidence of their practice, nor a difference in the strength of the evidence for the two practices; but because, in despite of this evidence, we can find no proof of Divine or Apostolic authority for such practices.

Origin, who died A. D. 254, also speaks in unmistakable terms of infant baptism, and calls it "a rite derived from the Apostles" (*Hagenbach's Hist. Doc.*, Vol. I, p. 201). His own words are as follows: "For this also it was that the church had from the Apostles a *tradition* to give baptism even to infants."

Ambrose, who died A. D. 390, says: "Infants that are baptized are reformed back again from wickedness to the primitive state of their nature." Chrysostom, as well as many others, testifies in similar terms.

Cyprian, who died A. D. 258, speaks for himself as follows: "As far as lies in us, no soul, if possible, is to be

lost. It is not for us to hinder any person from baptism and the grace of God; which rule, as it holds to all, so we think it *more especially to be observed in reference to infants.*" In the same year he wrote a letter to Fidus, stating what had been done on this subject by a Council of sixty-six bishops, which was held at Carthage, in Africa. He says: "But as regards the case of infants, who you say should not be baptized within the second or third day after their birth, and that respect should be had to the law of the ancient circumcision, whence you think that one newly born should not be baptized and sanctified within the eighth day, *we all in our Council thought very differently.*"

It is unmistakably evident, therefore, that infant baptism rests on an equally good foundation with triple immersion. By infant baptism, of course, immersion is meant. Other slight innovations in connection with baptism also occurred at this early period. Thus, for instance, self-immersion was practiced by some. Others contended for the validity of baptism in sand in case a man was converted on the desert and in danger of dying before he could reach water. The validity of baptism in wine was also seriously advocated; but it was only allowed in cases of the last necessity. Among a people and in an age where such predispositions prevailed it would rather be a strange thing if trine immersion had not taken the place of the single immersion of Apostolic times.

But changes in the ordinance of baptism were not limited to *subjects, mode and element.* The seed was also planted in the third century from which has grown the prepossessing but pernicious tree of perfusion—pouring and sprinkling—resulting in an entire change of the *action* of baptism. This change in the action of baptism had its origin in clinic baptism, *i. e.*, the pouring of water upon sick persons,

in their beds, in place of immersion. It was a substitute permitted only in extreme cases, and because of the assumed essentiality of baptism to salvation. The first known instance of affusion was the case of Novatian, some time before A. D. 251. And although there was serious objection taken later to his election as Bishop of Rome, "an objection in which all the clergymen united" (*Pergilly's Guide to Baptism*, p. 77); yet the act of affusion was permitted to stand for baptism. From that time on (A. D. 250) affusion was permitted and defended, but only in cases of necessity and in prospect of death. Nevertheless, out of it grew the more modern practice of accepting sprinkling for the baptism which Christ instituted. These facts are amply illustrated in the case of the Jew converted to Christianity in passing through a dry and desert country. It occurred in the reign of Marcus Aurelius, near the close of the second century. If genuine, as vouched for by Joannes Moschus, it ante-dates the case of Novatian some fifty years. This Jew, after his conversion, "was seized with grievous illness, and being apparently at the point of death begged his companions to baptize him. They replied that there was neither priest nor water at hand, and that without these baptism could not be had. "But being earnestly adjured not to refuse him, they divested the man, and sprinkled him three times (the triple baptism of Tertullian's time) with *sand* instead of water, saying they baptized him," &c. Authorities for this will be found in Joannes Moschus. It is also quoted by Bingham (*Antiq.*, book XI, c. ii, § 5).

Cyprian, Bishop of Carthage, who died A. D. 258, defends clinic baptism or affusion. Magnus, as well as others, doubted the propriety of this practice, and addressed a letter to Cyprian, asking "whether they are to be es-

teemed legitimate Christians who are not washed in the water, but only poured about" (*Cyprian*, Epis. 69). Such a question could never have arisen relative to trine immersion. It was so much less of an innovation, or of a modification of the usual practice, that it created no perceptible opposition. Not so with these other innovations. But Cyprian replied: "I, as far as my poor ability conceiveth, account that the Divine blessings can in no respect be mutilated and weakened, nor any less gift be imparted, when what is drawn from the Divine bounty is accepted with the full and entire faith both of the giver and receiver. For, in the saving sacrament the contagion of sin is not so washed away as in the ordinary washing of flesh is the filth of the skin and body, so that there should be need of saltpetre and other appliances, and a bath and a pool, in which the poor body may be washed and cleansed. For otherwise is the breast of the believer washed, otherwise is the mind of man cleansed, by the worthiness of faith. In the saving sacraments, when need compels and God vouchsafes his mercy, his compendious methods confer the whole benefit on believers. Nor should it disturb any one that the sick seem only to be sprinkled or affused with water when they obtain the grace of the Lord. Whence it is apparent that the sprinkling also of water has like force with the saving washing, and that when this is done in the church, where the faith both of the giver and receiver is entered, all holds good, and is consummated and perfected by the power of the Lord and the truth of faith."

If Cyprian is good authority for trine immersion, why not for sprinkling? If patristic evidence in favor of three immersions is a good foundation for that *mode* of baptism, why is it not equally good for this *action* for baptism? And Cyprian does not stand alone as a witness for this excep-

tional practice of sprinkling for baptism. Others testify to the same effect. And though for centuries the practice was confined to clinics, it nevertheless was, so to speak, the ovum whence in due time came the practice which to so great an extent has supplanted the valid baptism of God's word. And to-day there are those who will affirm with all the confidence of profound and unconscious ignorance that immersion is not baptism; or that Christ instituted sprinkling as much as immersion.

But these innovations in early times were not confined to baptism. The Communion suffered much in the same way. As early as the time of Tatian, a disciple of Justin Martyr, and leader of a sect of the Gnostics, who died near the close of the second century, water was used by the anti-Judaistic Encratites in place of wine in celebrating the Communion. They did not understand Christ to have commanded the use of water at the Communion, but they held the use of wine at any time to be sinful, and hence were called *Hydroparastates*. And because of this opinion they boldly rejected the example and precept of the Master, and changed a solemn institution of his word (*Guericke's Ch. Hist.*, Vol. I, p. 177). The Ebionites did the same. Once a year, on the feast of the Passover, they partook of the Communion, in remembrance of the last supper of Christ, using unleavened bread and water only (*Epiphanius*, XXX, 16).

It is needless to pursue this subject further. A similar process of change, and modification, and innovation could be pointed out in other respects; but what has passed under our observation is amply sufficient to indicate the tendency of the age. It also fully shows the danger of trusting to patristic testimony, in the absence of a Divine institution, as a means of establishing the Apostolic or Divine origin

of any rite. And it makes it strikingly manifest, that to be consistent one must either reject both trine immersion and infant baptism because not instituted by Christ; or else accept both because alike sustained by the testimony of the Fathers. It is, of course, understood that by infant baptism here we mean immersion.

There is also another point that this investigation has made clear. That is, that as yet we find no traces of new ordinances or sacraments. There were already certain additions to existing rites which were later separated into distinct "sacraments;" but as yet there is no such recognition of them. If, therefore, we should in a subsequent part of this work find another ordinance in this age of the church, there would in this fact be presumptive evidence in its favor. But for the present we insist on the proposition announced in the opening of this chapter, that the existence of a practice, or the belief of a doctrine, one, two, or three centuries after the days of the Apostles, is no proof whatsoever that it was instituted by Christ or taught and practiced by the Apostles. And as triple immersion rests solely upon the practice of the church from the close of the second century on, and upon the claim of Apostolic tradition in its favor, as stated by witnesses of the third century, but is without authority in God's word or the practice of the Apostles, we cannot receive it as an ordinance of divine institution. Weighed in the just balances of an unbiased logic it is clearly found wanting.

CHAPTER X.

Origin of Trine Immersion.

WHILE we do not claim to be able positively to point to a definite time in which trine immersion originated, a further discussion of the sources of error and innovations may possibly reflect some light upon the question. We can only pursue such an investigation profitably by divesting ourselves of all preconceived views of the state of the Christian world in that early age; by placing ourselves in imagination near the close of the Apostolic era, and by moving down the stream of time with the current of events, and observing the facts of well-authenticated history as they transpired. We shall readily discover that it is not an unaccountable thing that trine immersion should so early have found advocates, and that before the middle of the third century it should have so generally prevailed and been regarded as of Apostolic, if not of Divine, origin. Rather, we shall find that trine immersion was a very natural innovation at the time when we come upon the first traces of it, and among those who are reported as having introduced it. It was but a limited and harmless deviation from the true baptism compared with some other practices that prevailed. What is it as

compared with infant baptism, of which the New Testament knows absolutely nothing, which yet was accounted of Apostolic origin almost, if not quite, as early as trine immersion? Who will point out when it was introduced? And yet where is the Baptist that does not utterly repudiate it as an innovation?

There are at least three circumstances which, in the first century after the death of the Apostles, contributed very materially to the introduction into the church of errors and innovations. The first of these is the fact that the churches were not in possession of the Scriptures in that complete form in which we now have them. The Canon of the New Testament was only gradually formed. Not until about the time of Tertullian was there a collection of the New Testament writings which was generally received as constituting the Scriptures. And even then the New Testament, as we have it, was not the complete and exclusive authority which it now is. Before that time every thing was fragmentary and unsettled. Writings which are now received and known to be genuine and authentic were rejected. The Serverians rejected all the Epistles of Paul. Some, as the Prodicians, accepted no Scriptures as binding. Others received one of the Gospels. But while this was the case respecting the canonical Scriptures of the New Testament, in many localities spurious Gospels and Epistles were received, in some of which the wildest and most irrational things are contained. There were extant among these some pretended writings of Christ, and also some pretended contemporaneous accounts of his life; also apocryphal Gospels and Epistles ascribed to the various Apostles. These teach many things entirely at variance with, and even contrary to, the doctrines of our New Testament.

This fact alone would prove seriously detrimental to the

integrity and purity of the Apostolic doctrine, and would prove the occasion of differences in doctrine and practice. Even now, with the same Scriptures in the hands of all, what diversities of doctrines and duties are deduced therefrom by various religious bodies. But, in addition to this, we need to remember that these first centuries of the Christian era were the formative period of the church. Neither the Master, nor his Disciples, propounded a dogmatic system. Scientific theology is of later origin, and the first period of the church, the age of Apologetics, also was the period in which tenets and dogmas began to be formulated. But before such development, what may be known as the faith of the Apostles was firmly and historically established by bringing together those elements of Christian doctrine which are accounted essential (*Hist. of Doc.*, vol. I, p. 52). But this Rule of Faith, or Apostles' Creed, was, like the Constitution of the United States, a general law, in the interpretation of which differences at once sprung up. Every departure from the received interpretation of this canon of doctrine was considered heresy. Hence, heretics abounded and sects began to multiply. These heresies, as they are called, were often only different interpretations of the same Scriptures; but at other times they were doctrines derived from different sources.

The facility with which new doctrines and practical innovations were introduced was increased by the isolated and scattered state of the churches. Churches were often separated by long distances and with but little inter-communication. Palestine, Asia Minor, Mesopotamia, Persia, Armenia, India, Arabia, Egypt, Greece, Italy, and Gaul were the countries that had respectively their centers of churchly influence and power. In one locality they had portions of the Scriptures which they had not at other

points, or accepted as Scripture what other churches and leaders rejected. Practices and doctrines would thus originate in one locality ; be accepted as of Divine and Apostolic origin, and thus transmitted, with the Divine seal upon them, to other localities. There are indications that this was the case with trine immersion. It will be noticed that the testimony to its practice is confined to *Africa for the first fifty years*. Here it may have originated, and been carried thence to all parts of the Christian world as an Apostolic practice.

Now, along with these three circumstances so favorable for the introduction of new doctrines and practices, we must also bear in mind the intimate relation which has ever existed between doctrines and ordinances. Doctrines have a controlling power in modifying ordinances. Nearly all the modifications of, and additions to, ordinances, where they are professedly of Divine institution, are the result of doctrinal views. As already seen, one of the very earliest innovations was infant baptism. This was the outgrowth of two doctrines, viz: The doctrine of infant moral depravity, and the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Hence the absolute necessity of infant baptism in order to infant salvation. Rantism (a term to which those who practice sprinkling for baptism should by no means object) is another outgrowth of these doctrines. These were radical changes of the *subjects* and the *action* of baptism.

If such results have followed the development of these doctrines, is not the possibility clearly evident that a modification, or a more positive formation, of trinitarian ideas might lead to a triplication of the baptism instituted by Christ? History records the fact that the doctrine concerning the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and their interrelations, was gradually evolved. Into the details of

this evolution we cannot now enter, but our readers can readily verify our statement by consulting any standard work on the history of Christian doctrines. Suffice it here to say, that the term *trinity* did not take its place in the language of Christian theology until the time of Tertullian. Through his teachings the term *Son* was first quite distinctly applied to the *personality* of the Logos; and by him also, or by Theophylus, A. D. 183, the word *trinitas* was first employed to designate the Divine mystery of three persons in the unity of one Godhead (*Hodge*). Before this date it could, with little truth, be said that the doctrine of the essential Trinity was adequately understood. Some confounded the Logos with the Spirit, and others denied him a coördinate relation to the Father and the Son; while still others held to that peculiar system of subordination in which the Son was made inferior to the Father, and the Holy Spirit to both the Father and the Son.

That these views might have some influence on the mode of baptism, changing it from a single to a threefold immersion, is quite possible. And the more so if it should be made apparent that either the whole of Matthew's Gospel, which alone contains what is designated as "the longer *baptismal formula*" (Matt. xxviii: 19), or that paragraph embracing the said *baptismal formula*, was unknown in Africa before the doctrine of the Trinity had been so fully developed. Eusebius tells us (*Eccl. Hist.*) that the Hebrew Gospel of Matthew was found among the Christians in India in the latter part of the second century, by Pantænus, the missionary and philosopher; who afterwards with so much celebrity presided over the catechetical school at Alexandria, in Egypt (*Hist. Books of the Bible*, p. 166). What more natural than that the concurrence of these two facts, viz: The more complete and perfect development of the *trinus*,

threefold or three-in-one God, and the discovery of the Gospel by Matthew with its baptismal formula, "into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," should have had sufficient influence to change the single into a threefold baptism—the "one baptism in three immersions" to correspond with the one Godhead in three persons? And how natural, too, that it should at once, and with assurance, be asserted that this mode of baptism is authorized by the formula, and so is of *Apostolic* origin. Such a change would be of no moment compared with the introduction of infant baptism.

And now, let it be remembered that about this time trine immersion was probably first practiced, according to the testimony which we have reviewed, and that it is first mentioned in the very place to which for the first time Pantænus brought the Hebrew Gospel by Matthew. Before this time we have also no record of the use of the baptismal formula in Matthew in the administration of the ordinance. Baptism had been generally administered only in the name of Jesus. Neander, the prince of modern ecclesiastical historians, says that the formula of baptism which is regarded as the older is the "shorter one which refers only to Christ, to which there is allusion in the New Testament." Dr. Hare also says in his *Church History*: "Baptism as an initiatory rite was performed simply in the name of Jesus." This sentence occurs in his chapter on the "Apostolic Church," in his "History of the Christian Church." Robinson, in his *History of Baptism*, says: "There is no mention of baptizing in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost," in immediately post-Apostolic times." This testimony, of a negative character, certainly becomes very strong and significant in view of the fact that Peter enjoined baptism "in the name of Jesus Christ"

(Acts ii : 38); that when Philip preached in Samaria, to which place Peter and John were sent upon hearing "that Samaria had received the Word of God," those who believed "were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts viii : 5. 12, 16) ; and that under the instructions of Paul those who had been baptized "unto John's baptism" were "baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Acts xix : 3, 5).

But as soon as the doctrine of the Trinity was developed, and the Gospel of Matthew brought from India to Egypt, trine immersion, with individual exceptions, became gradually the rule. To the use of the formula furnished by Matthew in the administration of trine immersion we have the testimony of Augustine (*de Bapt., lib. vi, cap. 25*), Cyprian (*Epist. lxxiii*), Tertullian (*de Bapt., c. 13*), and others. Basil speaks of baptism as invalid if not administered with the words of the formula in Matthew (*De Sp. Scto., cap. 12*). But Ambrose favored the use of the shorter formula. But the formula found in Matthew had, probably, as much, if not more, to do with the introduction of trine immersion as correct and dogmatic views of the doctrine of the Trinity, though Marcion and his followers continued at least for some time to use the shorter formula. The Marcionites, the Valentinians, the Praxeans, and the Monarchians were distinct schools or sects which originated about the middle of the second century and before its close. At least the former two were Gnostic sects. Some of these Gnostic sects wholly rejected baptism ; but the Marcionites and Valentinus and his followers held baptism in high esteem (Hagenbach). They did not belong to the church—the Catholic church—of that time, and Hagenbach testifies that their "mode of baptism *differed from that of the Catholic church.*" What was their mode of baptizing?

Hagenbach says it was *trine* immersion—"the threefold baptism of the Marcionites." Thurman also states that Marcion, the leader of the Marcionites, *commenced* "to baptize the Gentiles by dipping them three times." Marcion pretended to bring about the restoration of primitive doctrine and polity; but is set down here by these two authorities as deviating from the practice of the Catholic, or general church as it was then, in the matter of baptism. We do not know upon what authority these statements are made, as no ancient writer mentions trine immersion before Tertullian, who was born A. D. 160. But we know that Hagenbach is an almost undisputed authority on matters of church doctrine, and that Thurman is not likely to state so important a point without some adequate testimony to sustain it. It is also in perfect harmony with other ascertained facts. Thus it will account for the silence of all the Fathers down to the time of Tertullian on the subject of trine immersion. It will explain the difference of views held in the third and fourth centuries as to the origin of trine immersion. And it fully agrees with the inference naturally to be drawn from the testimony of Tertullian and the instance of baptism with sand already noticed, that trine immersion must have been introduced before A. D. 200.

Marcion, according to Guericke and Shedd, was a very likely person to begin such an innovation. He was an anti-Judaistic Gnostic, and in strong sympathy with the Gentile-Christian tendency. He was the son of a bishop, said to have been excommunicated by his own father on account of his contempt for ecclesiastical authority and Apostolical tradition. It was the main characteristic of his school, according to Niednier, to sunder Christianity from its historical connections. He believed in three deific

principles, if he *was* not what we would properly call a Trinitarian, which could account for his threefold baptism. Although we do not say that in these things we have sufficient positive *proof* that he originated trine immersion, it yet shows that such origin would not be inconsistent. And when we add to this the incontroverted testimony of Hagenbach, as above given, the case becomes increasingly clear and indisputable.

Not only have we the testimony of Hagenbach, who cites authorities, that Marcion and his followers baptized by a "mode of baptism different from the Catholic [or general] church," and that it was "a threefold baptism;" but we also have evidence to show that other schools and sects of the same time did not practice the threefold baptism of the Marcionites. Bishop Beveridge says: "The Monarchians, the Praxeans, and other heretics did not baptize by trine immersion." They were heretics, according to certain *criteria* of judgment, just as the Marcionites and Valentinians were. *All these parties or sects flourished about the same time.* Along with the two specifically mentioned by Beveridge as practicing single immersion are generally classed the followers of Noetus and Beryllus; the former of Asia Minor, the latter of Arabia. Here, then, we have single immersion testified to as being practiced before the time of Tertullian, and under circumstances which indicate that it was the original practice. The conclusion, then, is by no means a forced one, after this protracted and critical investigation, that single immersion was the original and divinely instituted mode and action of baptism, and that trine immersion, as well as affusion and pædo-baptism, was of later and human origin.

PART II.

THE APOSTOLIC PRACTICE OF FEET-WASHING.



CHAPTER I.

The Ultimate Authority for an Ordinance.

THE Church of God has always taught and practiced the religious rite known as the washing of the saints' feet. Basing all religious rites upon the authority of Jesus Christ, we invariably inquire whether the particular ordinance in question has been instituted by him. In the case of baptism we find two facts which, irrespective of the historical observance of the ordinance, are sufficient in our judgment to determine both the specific action required and the moral obligation to perform it. Christ has commanded his disciples and followers to be baptized, and he has commanded immersion. At a comparatively early age the divine institution in both these particulars was perverted, in that immersion was changed to affusion, and children instead of disciples were made the subjects. But knowing the divine command, we are neither disconcerted nor turned aside from the right ways of the Lord by this perversion of a divine ordinance.

In a similar manner do we find our authority for observing the Communion. It is true, indeed, that the words of institution, as given by the Lord Jesus, are, as a perpetual command, perceptibly weak. But supplemented by the Apostolic practice and the revelation given to Paul touching this rite, its perpetual obligation cannot be called in

question; and we therefore observe it, and observe it at the time of day when it was instituted, and when, according to the name it so commonly goes by and the evident practice in early times, it is most appropriate to do so. Christ alone has the right, and to him exclusively belongs the prerogative, of instituting ordinances of religion for the church; and we do not claim any power to modify, in any respect, much less to abrogate, any ordinance which he has instituted.

An ordinance being an outward, formal, sensuous act of moral significance, performed in obedience to the command of Christ, wherever we find these elements we are ready to acknowledge an ordinance to be perpetually observed. Now, in reading John xiii we find all the elements of an ordinance. We have:

(1) An outward, formal, sensuous act performed by the Lord Jesus.

(2) We have an act of special and appropriate moral significance.

(3) We have the specific and unquestioned word of command that this act is to be performed by the disciples of Christ. We hence claim that Christ instituted this rite as a monumental ordinance in the church, and for this reason we observe it. We are sometimes asked whether Christ commanded his disciples to teach this rite; whether the command in Matt. xxviii: 20, "Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you," does not refer to the things he commanded his disciples to *observe*. But while such a construction is in harmony with the terms employed and the grammatical construction of the sentence, the evident meaning is, that the Apostles were to teach the disciples made by them everything, both of faith and practice, which Christ had commanded or

taught them. But assuming that such is the force of this command, those who reject feet-washing ask us: "If this is so, and if Christ commanded the Apostles to observe the washing of feet, why did they not teach it? or if they did, and it was practiced, why have we no record?" In this form the question is hard to answer, and it might be nearest the exact truth to say in reply: We do not know. There are very many points in New Testament history with reference to which unanswerable questions of this kind can readily be asked, and which can just as little be answered as this one. The reason for many things cannot be given. But let it be remembered that our inability to give a reason for the existence of a fact is no evidence against the fact itself. So in this case. The washing of feet may have been practiced in Apostolic times and still no record of it kept by the writers of the New Testament. Hence, their silence is by no means conclusive, if indeed they *are* wholly silent on the point.

The practice of any ordinance in the Apostolic church is regarded as furnishing an unanswerable interpretation to the teachings of Christ, should there be in anywise a dispute with reference thereto. It is claimed that this is the case with the Communion, which rests upon a slender foundation in the words of Christ. So the duty of observing a literal baptism is emphasized and rendered clear by the practice of the Apostles. Why, say those who are opposed to feet-washing, does this not hold good in reference to this rite? In this question and the accompanying comments we can trace three points which need careful discussion. These are as follows, viz:

I. THE COMMUNION WAS OBSERVED IN APOSTOLIC TIMES, AND RECORDS OF THIS FACT OCCUR IN THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS.

II. EXCEPTING THE TEXT IN TIMOTHY (1 TIMOTHY V : 9, 10), THERE IS NO MENTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF THE PRACTICE OF WASHING FEET BY THE CHRISTIANS IN APOSTOLIC TIMES.

III. THE WASHING OF FEET IN TIMOTHY IS CLASSED WITH OTHER GOOD AND LAWFUL WORKS, AND SO IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS AN ORDINANCE.

From these so-called premises the inference is drawn (for it cannot be dignified as a conclusion), that the washing of feet is not an ordinance. We dispute such a proposition, that a rite commanded by Christ is not an ordinance because its observance as such in the Apostolic churches is *not on record*. It is unsound and dangerous. And yet this is the implication whenever we are challenged to produce the record of such observance. If the Apostles and primitive disciples did not observe a given rite it is evidence that they did not understand Christ to have commanded it. But the absence of any *record* of such observance is no proof of non-observance. If the non-observance could be demonstrated we should be willing to concede the force of the argument, but this is not possible, and hence we reject the conclusion.

In disputing the conclusion of our opponents we are specially mindful of two facts, viz :

(1) The peculiar and meager record of the observance of the Communion, in Apostolic times, as found in the New Testament ; and,

(2) The fact that positive evidence of the observance of feet-washing in Apostolic times, as a religious rite, may not be wholly wanting. These points will become more apparent in the further discussion of the three propositions given above, to which careful attention is invited.

CHAPTER II.

The Communion in the New Testament.

THOSE who challenge us to produce any instances of the practice of washing the saints' feet in the Apostolic churches lay themselves open to a similar demand on our part to furnish proof of the celebration of the Communion among the primitive Christians. They affirm that this was done. We call for the record. Their affirmation is in the first proposition quoted in the preceding chapter, which proposition we are now investigating. It is as follows, viz :

I. THE COMMUNION WAS OBSERVED IN APOSTOLIC TIMES, AND RECORDS OF THIS FACT OCCUR IN THE WRITINGS OF THE APOSTLES AND EVANGELISTS.

1. We meet this in part by a counter proposition, and throw the burden of proof upon our opponents where, under this affirmation, it justly belongs. We affirm that so far as the Acts and all the Epistles, except the first Epistle to the Corinthians, are concerned, the Communion is not once mentioned. Our opponents interpret the "breaking of bread" in the Acts to mean partaking of the Communion. This is little more than a naked assumption; an assumption which has to face facts of a very clearly defined and obstinate character. Indeed, there is no possibility of proving

that to break bread means to celebrate the Communion. Among other points which might be advanced against understanding the term thus is the fact that in not a single instance in the Acts is the wine mentioned in connection with the bread. We do not say that the Communion was not celebrated in *connection* with the meals indicated; we only say there is no mention of the fact, and no means whereby the affirmation that it was can be established. We cannot here, without unnecessary repetition, enter upon a discussion of this point; but we ask the reader to turn to Part III, chap. IX, p. — of this book, where he will find the question fully investigated.

2. The term "breaking bread" is used to indicate the fact that in primitive times social meals were eaten by the Disciples on occasions when assembled for religious worship. The *agapæ* or love-feasts originated in this way. If, now, at this breaking of bread the communion was celebrated without being mentioned, then it is also possible that feet-washing was observed at the same meals. The one supposition is just as possible and natural as the other. Besides, the presumption is in favor of the practice of washing feet at these meals. This is seen in the following two facts, viz:

(1.) That these meals were largely in imitation of the Lord's last supper with his Disciples, hence for a long time called the Lord's supper by way of eminence. (2.) That at this Lord's supper, or Lord's last supper, Christ washed the feet of his Disciples, as well as instituted the Communion. If, now, the Disciples later ate this common meal in imitation of the Lord's last supper, and, as our opponents *suppose*, observed the Communion, what is to hinder us from also supposing that at the same time they washed feet, as Christ had done?

Moreover, the Savior taught us that if we love him we will keep his commandments. No one denies that in John xiii: 14-15, there is more of a commandment than in Matt. xxvi: 26-27, or Mark xiv: 22-23, or Luke xxii: 19-20. There is no doubt that the Apostles loved Jesus. Hence they kept the commandment in John xiii. And as Luke nowhere mentions the keeping of the commandment in Luke xxii: 19-20, so he does not mention the keeping of the one in John xiii: 14-15.

3. But if there is no evidence in the Acts of the observance of the Communion, then there is only left the text in Corinthians as New Testament evidence of the observance of the Communion by the Apostolic churches. That text, it will be observed, corrects a reprehensible practice among the Corinthians in the matter of a common feast or meal which they had probably substituted for the Communion. It is clear proof that they pretended to observe the Communion. It is just as clear proof that they had made a terrible perversion of it; and this perversion was the occasion of Paul's reference to the Communion, and of the injunctions he lays down, just as it is said: "Evil customs give rise to good laws." Had there been no such abuse existing in the church at Corinth the Epistles of the New Testament would have been wholly silent touching the observance of the Communion; and as the washing of feet had not been thus perverted, no mention is made of it.

Such a conclusion seems fully warranted from the fact that all the other Epistles are silent on the Communion, just as the acts of the Apostles are. So on a similar occasion the washing of feet was introduced into the proceedings of a general council. This occurred in Spain, at the council of Elvira, in A. D. 306. Seeing the abuse which some persons made of it, by putting confidence in it for the

remission of sins, said Council ordered the suppression of the rite in Spain (Calmet).

It hence becomes very apparent that this argument, drawn from the silence of the New Testament touching the observance of an ordinance, has two edges. If it is sufficient to destroy the ritual character of feet-washing as an ordinance of divine institution, it may prove equally effective against the Communion. If the opposers of feet-washing are not willing to go to this extreme length, then they may have to abandon their position altogether, or else sacrifice their consistency. For, evidently, so far as the elements of an ordinance are concerned, if they are found in any words and example of Christ, they are found in John xiii; and as for a command, a specific law of institution, words could not well be more definite and positive than these: "For I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." While the moral obligation to do what Christ has enjoined by precept and example is thus expressed: "If I, then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." And as the washing of feet and the Communion may ultimately be found to have equal confirmation in Apostolic practice, there would be no alternative but to reject both or accept both.



CHAPTER III.

Feet-washing in the New Testament.

HAVING carefully examined in the previous chapter the first proposition, which affirms that the Communion was observed in Apostolic times, and that records of this fact occur in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists, and having found but little foundation for the latter part of the proposition, we might naturally infer that the other propositions relative to feet-washing may also lack proof. If this is the case we have reason to think a diligent investigation will discover the fact. Upon such an investigation we are now prepared to enter.

The second proposition is as follows, viz:

II. EXCEPTING THE TEXT IN TIMOTHY (1 Tim. v : 9, 10) THERE IS NO MENTION IN THE NEW TESTAMENT OF THE PRACTICE OF WASHING FEET BY THE CHRISTIANS IN APOSTOLIC TIMES.

It is supposed by some that the Apostle Paul must refer to at least *three* ordinances in his letter to the Corinthians (1 Cor. xi). If it were an undisputed fact that he makes use of the term *ordinances* in that restricted sense which is now so common, there could be but little doubt of the truthfulness of this position. He says: "Now, I praise

you, brethren, that ye remember me in all things, and keep the ordinances as I delivered them unto you" (1 Cor. xi : 2). Here is a plurality of ordinances. But he did not praise them for the manner in which they observed the Agape. Neither does he say that he delivered that unto them; and the Communion they had not observed as he had received it from the Lord (1 Cor. xi : 17-23). Hence, there would be no plurality of ordinances, in our sense of the term, for them to observe if feet-washing was not one of them. This is the argument; but to our mind it would not bear the test of a critical investigation, and hence we are not disposed to place much stress upon it.

Accordingly we will concede the correctness of this second proposition; that is, except in Timothy, there is no mention of feet-washing in the New Testament after the rite was performed by Christ. But in this respect, as we have already clearly demonstrated, it stands on an equality with the Communion. For, except in Corinthians, where an abuse is corrected, there is likewise no mention of the Communion in the New Testament after Christ had commanded its observance.

This fact gives additional force to the concluding paragraph of the preceding chapter; unless, indeed, it should become evident in some way that this reference in Timothy to the washing of the saints' feet is to a customary act of hospitality, or merely to a good work, and not to an ordinance of religion. To this point we shall now specifically direct our attention.

The third proposition affirmed by those who reject the washing of the saints' feet as a religious ordinance is as follows, viz :

III. THE WASHING OF FEET IN TIMOTHY v : 9, 10, IS

CLASSED WITH OTHER GOOD AND LAWFUL WORKS, AND SO IS NOT TO BE CONSIDERED AS AN ORDINANCE.

In other words, it is claimed that the washing of feet in Timothy is not an ordinance, but a good work. What reasons are assigned? Simply that it is mentioned among "other good and lawful works." It is a work of hospitality, say our opponents generally.

Our direct answer to this position is simple and brief. We affirm two propositions, which are sufficient to relieve us of the main weight of the burden of proof. These are as follows, viz:

1. That the mention of feet-washing in the connection in which it stands (1 Tim. v: 10) is in nowise inconsistent with its character as an ordinance. This we shall endeavor to prove further on.

2. That if it is a work of hospitality simply, it is very singular that Paul should first say: "If she have *lodged strangers*," specifically a work of hospitality; and that he should then add: "If she have washed the *saints'* feet."

It will presently appear that we need not go farther in an effort to furnish a direct answer to and refutation of this objection. A complete refutation will be found in the correct interpretation of the text in question (1 Tim. v: 9, 10) as it appears in the light of authentic history. It is first requisite that we should have a better translation than that of the Authorized Version. The Revision gives it thus: "Let none be enrolled as a widow under three score years old." It is not clearly determined that this is what Paul meant. Dr. Smith says: "It is laid down in 1 Tim. v: 9, 10, that a widow is not to be entered on the church-roll." The meaning of the words used by Paul is not difficult to determine. They mean that a widow is not to have her name put upon the *catalogue* until she has reached a certain

age, etc. But what catalogue? We have good reasons for believing that the catalogue referred to was that of deaconesses. The *wives* of deacons in those times, as far as we can learn, were deaconesses as a general thing. And now says Paul: Let not any widows be thus enrolled [as deaconesses] under a certain age, etc. Of course these widows thus enrolled were thereafter also provided for by the church. Nearly all the more recent commentators take this view. Others, however, reverse the order, and hold that these widows *had* been deaconesses, and were now to be enrolled as beneficiaries. Even Dr. A. Clarke thinks that *widow* in this connection was the name of an office [deaconess], because ordinarily filled, as he claims, by widows.

Now, according to undisputed authority:

1. The office of deaconess existed in the primitive church from the time of the Apostles down to the sixth century, and later.

2. According to Dr. Blackburn (*History of the Christian Church*) this passage in Timothy (1 Tim. v: 9, 10) was quoted in the earliest post-Apostolic times as giving the duties and qualifications of deaconesses. Dr. Smith, quoting this text, adds: "These restrictions seem to have been consistently maintained in the early church." A reference to the Apostolical Constitutions shows that they are elaborately repeated as qualifications of an order of church officers. Origen and Tertullian and others show by their writings that they were in force in their times. Hence we feel justified in saying that this passage refers to the works and duties and qualifications of deaconesses.

3. One of the commonly recognized duties of deaconesses was to wash the feet of the saints religiously; that is, of the female saints. This was sometimes done at baptism,

and again in connection with other services. Abundant authorities can be quoted to this effect up to the time of the Council of Elvira, A. D. 306, which expressly prohibited the religious washing of feet; but later, in A. D. 675, we find it expressly sanctioned by the Synod of Toledo. At this time the practice was wide-spread (Dr. Smith), though probably not universal. And the women, and especially the deaconesses, officially washed the feet of women.

Hence, it is justly claimed that Paul here (1 Tim. v : 9-10) means either that the name of no widow was to be entered on the catalogue of beneficiaries who had not been a deaconess, and that among the duties of a deaconess was the washing of the saints' feet; or, which seems more probable, that no widow was to be enrolled as a church official—a deaconess—unless she had already given evidence of her fitness for the position as required in this text. Dr. Lange says: "Almost all the older commentators are of the first opinion; nearly all the recent ones of the latter." Accordingly, Paul's language amounts to this: Let no widow be enrolled who has not served the church in the capacity of a deaconess; and the part of this service he speaks of was to attend upon the female members in the washing of feet.

This also shows why the washing of feet is mentioned and not the Communion or baptism. These two ordinances were administered by the ministers and elders; the other one by the deacons. Hence he could not say, if she have been baptized; or, if she have partaken of the Communion; but with striking propriety could he say, if she have washed the saints' feet. It, therefore, appears very evident that the washing of feet has as much support as an Apostolic practice in the New Testament as the Communion.

ion; and had it not been for the abuse of the Communion at Corinth, feet-washing would be better supported historically in the New Testament than the Communion, just as the command to observe it is clearer and more positive, as Dr. Abbott acknowledges.



CHAPTER IV.

The Post-Apostolic Practice of Feet-Washing.

IN discussing the question of trine immersion our German Baptist brethren put great stress on the practice of this mode of baptism in the early church. They insist that traces of it can be found within one hundred years, if not less, from the death of the Apostles. They do not claim that such practice alone is sufficient to establish the fact that trine immersion was the original mode; but, in their judgment, it raises a presumption to that effect. If, now, there were the least evidence in the New Testament that such a mode of baptism was practiced by the Apostles, such a claim would be materially strengthened. Indeed, it would be difficult to resist the conclusion that such a mode of baptism was originally instituted by Christ. The serious defect in their chain of evidence is that it suddenly breaks off about the time of Tertullian, about A. D. 200, and beyond that there is nothing to support their position.

The same course of reasoning is followed with reference to the love-feast. There is this advantage, however, with reference to this custom, viz: It can be traced to the time

of Jude, who speaks distinctly of the *agapæ* among those to whom his Epistle is addressed. This is conclusive evidence that a meal in all respects similar to the *agapæ* of later times was then common, and that the name was derived from the language employed by Jude. And even more than this. Common meals were probably a frequent custom from the very first. The peculiar circumstances of the early disciples gave rise to the practice of "breaking bread from house to house," and so the more formal communion meal of later years originated, degenerating at times into festive carousals. The serious defect in this argument from history lies in the fact that the human origin of the custom is too clearly apparent, as well as in the entire absence of anything like a divine word of institution.

Advocates of infant baptism and of affusion follow a similar line of argument, and with no better success. In their case the absence of instances of the baptism of infants in Apostolic times adds force to the entire want of even the semblance of a Divine command. And yet history is one of the main strongholds of the Pædobaptist; a refuge which can be readily flanked and left in the rear in an onward march to conquest. A chain without an anchor is of no value to a vessel driven by a storm or borne from the harbor by the receding waves. The *word of the Divine command* is the anchor to every chain of evidence, or argument, in favor of the ritual character of any ceremony. When this is wanting the chain of argument and evidence is fatally defective.

Now, did we find this same defect with reference to feet-washing we should not simply make no effort to trace the history of this rite in the Apostolic and post-Apostolic churches; but we should reject its claims entirely to being

in anywise entitled to the rank and dignity of an ordinance of religion. But when we find, as in John xiii, an unquestioned command to wash one another's feet, preceded by the example of the Lord himself; and when we further on find that such command was enjoined by Apostolic authority, as in 1 Tim. v: 9, 10, we have a right to avail ourselves of the tactics of our opponents and add the weight of a presumption from history to the argument as already developed. It is now *only in this light* that we appeal to patristic practice. It will serve to entrench the interpretation which we have given of 1 Tim. v: 9, 10.

Our reading of the testimony of history in favor of feet-washing as an ordinance convinces us of three things, viz:

1. *That feet-washing was practiced from the time of the Apostles as a religious ordinance.*

2. *That such practice was based upon the Divine institution and the practice of the Apostles.*

3. *That the current interpretation of 1 Tim. v: 9, 10 was carried out in regulations with reference to the deaconesses of the early church, who were required religiously to wash the feet of female members of the church.*

In these views we are fully borne out by the eminent Dr. Philip Schaff. In his history of the Christian Church from the Apostles on he has occasion to note the practice of feet-washing. He endeavors to look upon it with the eyes of those early saints, and then testifies as follows: "This washing of feet seems to answer fully the conception of a sacrament. There is the outward and visible sign—the washing of feet; and the promise of salvation connected therewith; and the express command of Christ—"I have given you an example," &c.

In *Chambers' Encyclopedia* we have the same testimony, also abundantly confirming our conclusions as above stated.

Under the word "Washing of feet" it is said : "The origin of this observance is extremely ancient. It is founded on the example and exhortation or precept of our Lord Jesus, John xiii : 5-14, and is traceable in the writings of Justin, Tertullian, Ambrose and Augustine. The writings of Augustine plainly show that this practice was in use in his day * * * * as a solemn institution of Christ."

Justin, to whom reference is here made, was born A. D. 89 and died A. D. 176. He is the first author after the Apostles, so far as we now know, in whose writings this subject is mentioned. We have not his words at our command, and so can only state upon the authority of others that he speaks of the washing of feet as a religious rite. From this time on we shall find ample testimony to show its regular observance among the primitive churches. True, at some points it was rejected, as at Rome in the time of Ambrose (A. D. 340), and in other places its practice was prohibited by Councils, as in Spain in A. D. 306.

The testimony of Dr. William Smith to the existence of the practice of washing feet in the early church is very emphatic. He says : "The principal ceremonial ablutions anciently used in the church * * * * are * * * the washing of the feet of the catechumens" (*Dict. Chr. Ant.*, Vol. II, p. 2030). Again : "The *pedilavium* or washing of the feet of the catechumens, of which some traces appear in the ritual of the early church" (*Ibid*, Vol. II, p. 1160). Again : "A peculiar custom prevailed in the early Gallican ritual, of a symbolical washing of the feet of the newly baptized, having reference to the action of our Lord recorded in the Gospel of John xiii : 1-16" (*Ibid*, Vol. I, p. 164.) The positive testimony to the fact that this washing was in imitation of Christ's act appears from the words of the ritual itself. The deacon or deaconess officiating is

thus instructed : “ While washing his feet thou shalt say, “ I wash thy feet, as our Lord Jesus Christ did unto his disciples.’ ”

It appears, therefore, that this rite was not always performed on the same occasion. Sometimes it was connected with baptism, either preceding or following that ordinance, and at other times with the Communion. Sometimes it had no connection with any other ordinance. It was on different occasions a matter of serious dispute at what time this rite was to be performed. We have no doubt that in the earliest times it preceded the Communion ; but how long it held this place cannot now be determined.

The author of the *Racovian Catechism*, a work published in A. D. 1602, thus refers to the early practice of feet-washing : “ That this holy custom was held in esteem and observed by the ancients appears from the writings of some of them. See Tertullian, *lib.* II, *ad Uxorem* ; Cyprian *de Lotione Pedum*. Ambrose (*lib.* III, *de Sacram.*), affirms that this holy custom was retained in the church of Milan down to his time, which Grotius likewise notices under John xiii : 15. So also Bernard, like these writers already named, regarded the washing of feet as a sacrament (*Sermo de Cæna*). Moreover the XVIIth Council of Toledo, held in the year 694, commands that ‘ bishops and priests should wash the feet of the faithful at the celebration of the Lord’s Supper, after the example of Christ ; adding, ‘ in order that the neglected custom may be again introduced.’ ” “ Thus likewise Zacharias, bishop of Rome, in reply to the inquiry of Boniface, bishop of Mentz, whether it were allowable for holy woman, as was the custom among the men, to wash one another’s feet at the Lord’s Supper, and at other times, states : ‘ This is a command of our Lord.’ ” Of course, this

latter incident is further removed from Apostolic times than we care to go for evidence; but it serves to show the connection which history to a great extent establishes between the washing of feet and the Communion.

We have already seen that Justin, who lived at the close of the Apostolic era, testifies relative to the practice of feet-washing in his day. We shall now introduce several other ancient witnesses, already mentioned, and hear what they have to say. Origen, the recognized father of biblical criticism and exegesis, born A. D. 185, furnishes us some testimony of a negative character. His testimony is especially valuable in its bearing on our interpretation of 1 Tim. v : 9, 10. Dr. Smith (*Dict. Chr. Ant.*) assures us that of the widows who were the objects of care to the church officers, some were formally enrolled in earliest times on the *Katalogos* as a distinct class or "ordo." It will be noted that *Katalogos* is the very word Paul uses in 1 Tim. v : 9, 10. The formation of this "ordo," or class, or order, is attributed by the Clementine Homilies to the Apostle Peter (*Recogn.* 6, 15, *Hom.* 11, 35). These Clementine Homilies are called the Homilies of the Apostle Peter, and are said to have been written by Clement of Rome, the fellow-laborer of Paul mentioned in Phil. iv : 3. As early as the writing of the pastoral Epistles restrictions were placed upon admission to this "ordo" or class, and these restrictions are said to be formulated in 1 Tim. v : 9, 10. They were consistently and strictly maintained in the early church upon the authority of Paul, and are elaborately repeated in the Apostolical Constitutions. Now, that the condition as to the "washing of the saints' feet," as stated by Paul, was enforced literally in many places is evident from the fact that it was specifically made the duty of the members of this "ordo," as already seen, to perform

this service. It also appears from the writings of Origen, as above instanced. Dr. Smith says: "Origen shews (*in Joann*, tom. 32, c. 7, vol. iv, p. 422) that stress was laid upon every part of them [these restrictions in 1 Tim. v: 9, 10] *by arguing against* too literal an interpretation of the clause 'if she have washed the saints' feet.'" Some undoubtedly favored literal washing of the saints' feet, otherwise there was no occasion to argue against it. Besides, it is not in evidence that this position of Origen was against the custom as an *ordinance*; but against the interpretation which it received. We know that on other points he gave great offense in his teachings by explaining, after the manner of the Midrash, known to him through the Jewish masters, allegorically and symbolically that which in the Scriptures warred with the common human understanding, or seemed repugnant in manner or matter (*Lib. Univ. Knowl.*, vol. xi, p. 65). And so in this case he may have opposed the too literal interpretation of the rite, preferring the symbolical now so widely accepted. In any event, his words prove that a literal rite was not unknown in his time; indeed, was widely known, or it would not have invoked the opposition (if it did) of so celebrated a bishop of the church.

Origen on doctrinal points is, moreover, not a reliable leader. He was not only a liberalist; but, on some points, a heretic. After what is called his "transition from unconscious to conscious belief," he carefully examined all the different systems of human speculation which came within his reach. He adopted the principle "that we are not, under the pretence of piety, to pin our faith on that which is held by the multitude, and which, therefore, alone seems to stand on high authority; but on that which results through examination and logical conclusions from

established and admitted truths." But this liberality of mind led him, while upholding all the ethical portions of the Bible, to *reject a great deal* of its supposed historical and legal contents for all purposes except as starting points for homiletics (*Lib. Univ. Knowl., Origen*). Upon such grounds he might oppose the ordinance of feet-washing; but still, by his opposition, he gives evidence of its acceptance by others in his time. It evidently was not well established at that time what came from the Apostles or what did not, for Origen claimed that infant baptism is a rite derived from them. He might believe feet-washing is not.

We next come to Ambrose, born A. D. 340. He was bishop of Milan, in Italy, A. D. 374. In a work published in 1837 by Dr. John Henry Hopkins, entitled "The Church of Rome in her primitive Purity, compared with the Church of Rome of the present day," he refers to the testimony of Ambrose on feet-washing. He says: "In a discourse upon the sacred ceremony of washing feet, which was used in primitive days by many of the churches, and was greatly esteemed by Ambrose, he saith: 'We are not ignorant that the Church of Rome has not this custom; this custom of washing feet she does not *retain*. Behold, therefore, perhaps she has declined on account of the multitude. There are some truly who endeavor to excuse her by the plea that this custom is not a sacred rite, but it is simply to be done to our guests as a mark of hospitality. But it is one thing to perform an act in token of humility, and another thing to perform it in order to sanctification. Hear therefore how we prove this to be a sacred rite in order to sanctification. 'Unless I wash thy feet thou hast no part with me.' I do not thus speak that I may censure others, but that I may commend my office. I desire in all things (lawful) to follow the Roman church, but nevertheless we

men have sense also, and therefore what is *more correctly practiced* elsewhere we are more correct in practicing. In this respect we follow the Apostolic Peter himself; we adhere to the example of his devotion. For truly Peter the Apostle is our authority for this assertion. Peter himself saith: 'Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head' " (*Ambrose on the Sacraments*, book 3, chap. 1, sec. 5, Vol. 2, p. 362-3). Dr. Hopkins thus comments: "Notwithstanding the attachment of Ambrose to the Roman church (*Romana ecclesia*), he presumes to differ from her; to retain and practice a sacred ceremony which she had *cast away*; to argue against her openly in a public discourse; to charge her with declining after the multitude, and to prefer his own judgment and the custom of other churches on a point of *sacred order*, which he regarded as a means of sanctification."

Upon the testimony of Ambrose, as well as from the Gallican Sacramentary, from the early Gallican Missal, from the Gothic Missal and from other sources, we learn that at this period in the history of the church, and for some time prior, the rite of washing feet was religiously observed in Spain, in Italy, in Gaul and in the countries northward and eastward of Italy. But in Spain, as we have already stated, the rite was suppressed shortly after the time of Ambrose, by the canons of the Council of Elvira. And we learn the additional fact, that the women serving at the celebration of this ceremony did so as members of an "ordo" or class, upon the authority of Paul in 1 Tim. v: 9, 10, and of Peter (true or false), according to the Clementine Homilies. Bingham in his *Antiquities of the Christian Church* assures us that "among those [churches] which always received it [the washing of feet] is the church of Milan," of which Ambrose was bishop.

We have one more witness whose testimony we wish to produce. This is Augustine, the greatest of the Latin Fathers, born at Tagasti, in Numedia, November 13, A. D. 354. The Racovian catechism refers to him, among others, as testifying to the observance of this rite. So does Dr. William Smith in his *Dictionary of Christian Antiquities*, as also Calvin, Lange, and others. He speaks of the ordinance in two of his Epistles. In the one addressed to Januarius (Epistle 118) he refers to the practice as then existing, and also to the doubts entertained as to the proper day when the ceremony ought to be performed. In his Epistle 119 he speaks of an effort then making to "recommend it by fixing it to some more sacred time, and yet distinguish it from the sacrament of baptism." These chose either "the third day of the octaves, or the octave after baptism itself, as most convenient for this purpose."

In view of the historical evidence thus furnished, *taken in connection with the plain command of Christ*, we need not feel any surprise when the fact becomes clear that there is a constant stream of testimony to the observance of this expressive rite from the Apostles down to the present time. Even the Church of England, according to the statement in *McClintock and Strong's Cyclopedia*, "at first carried out the letter of the command." This work also is authority for the statement that in the early post-Apostolic times the command, "Ye ought to wash one another's feet," was observed not only after the spirit, but also after the letter. We need, therefore, not hesitate to re-affirm the propositions which we laid down upon the threshold of this inquiry into the post-Apostolic practice of feet-washing. What were then mere affirmations are now valid conclusions. Hence, we lay it down as matter of fact:

1. *That feet-washing was practiced from the time of the Apostles as a religious ordinance.*

2. *That such practice was based upon the Divine institution and the practice of the Apostles.*

3. *That the current interpretation of 1 Tim. v : 9, 10, was carried out in regulations with reference to the deaconesses of the early church, who were required religiously to wash the feet of female members of the church.*

If, therefore, we would maintain our consistency we cannot accept the Communion as an ordinance of religion and reject the washing of the saints' feet. This is the position occupied by the Quakers. Barclay, in his *Apology for the True Christian Divinity*, being an explanation and vindication of the principles and doctrines of the people called Quakers, argues at some length to show that feet-washing is as much an ordinance as the Communion; and as the former is spiritualized by the majority of Christians, the latter should be also. That, therefore, the Christian world is inconsistent in retaining the literal Communion and rejecting feet-washing, while the Quakers, who believe in spiritualizing the washing of feet, to be consistent must reject all formal ritual observances. The error of the Quaker is in spiritualizing all ordinances; the error of others is in inconsistently spiritualizing one and retaining two in their literal sense. We prefer to apply the same principles of interpretation in all cases, and thus to follow the Lamb whithersoever he has led.

CHAPTER V.

Feet-washing has the Elements of an Ordinance.

AFTER weighing carefully, and irrespective of the testimony of Scripture, the historical evidence for the practice of feet-washing in post-Apostolic times, and comparing it with similar testimony in favor of certain other practices, candor compels any one to concede that the difference is in favor of the latter. The testimony for the washing of feet in the century following the death of the Apostles is comparatively meager, and yet enough is on record to make it evident that the rite was observed. We can trace it about as near to the Apostles as we can trine immersion, but the witnesses are not so numerous. If, therefore, we were to judge *solely* by the historical testimony we could no more receive feet-washing as an ordinance instituted by Christ than we can receive trine immersion. But, in respect of the Divine institution, these two rites do not stand on an equality according to the judgment of those who have no interest in this controversy. And it is exclusively on this ground that we receive the one and reject the other.

The texts of Scripture found in John xiii furnish us with all the essential elements of an ordinance of religion.

We find there the five elements which enter into all ceremonial rites. These are :

1. Divine institution, or the command of Christ.
2. The obligation of perpetual observance.
3. A sensuous element indicated, such as water, bread and wine, etc.
4. Formal ceremonial observance.
5. An underlying truth upon which the rite rests, and which it symbolizes.

If we find these elements anywhere in the New Testament in connection with what Christians so generally recognize as the ordinance of the Communion, we certainly find them more positively and conspicuously in connection with Christ's washing of his Disciples' feet (John xiii). Should we not discover ample indications in the literature of the post-Apostolic period that this rite was observed, the fact could be accounted for in two ways.

1. Had the rite not been practiced, or had the possibility of the religious and ritual character of the service never forced itself upon the minds of Christian people, then no reference to it could be expected. These facts would fully account for the silence of the Apostolic Fathers on the subject, just as they account for the silence on the same subject by Episcopal or Presbyterian writers of the present period. But this has never been the case since, and it is not probable that it was then. In every age of the Christian church from Justin Martyr down this rite has forced itself into public recognition. How much more likely was it to do this in the post-Apostolic period when so many lived who had seen and conversed with the men whose feet Christ had washed, and to whom he had said: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you?"

2. A second and far more natural supposition would be, that there was no dispute about the ordinance and no doubt as to the obligation to observe it. This accords with later history. During the time of the Fathers of the Church the subject of feet-washing came up repeatedly, and principally because of certain questions pertaining to the manner and time of its observance, or the comparative dignity and saving efficacy of the ordinance. This, too, is in harmony with the silence so uniformly observed in the writings of the Apostles and Evangelists touching the Communion. Paul was forced to allude to it in order to correct a serious abuse. Had it been properly observed no mention of it would be found in the New Testament outside of the Gospels. Hence we read nothing about feet-washing until the time of Justin.

Still, we concede the force of the objection, but we fall back upon the Divine institution, and in its presence all objections of this character become utterly harmless and untenable. It is not our purpose to discuss the question of Divine institution, as that would be foreign to the purpose of this investigation. But we shall furnish our readers with two opinions, from entirely distinct sources, bearing upon the question whether a Divine ordinance of religion is to be found in John xiii. We shall first produce the views of an eminent English Quaker of the seventeenth century. The Quakers do not observe ceremonial ordinances. Hence, this author presents arguments against the practice of "breaking bread," as he calls it, as a religious service. He says, Papists affirm that there are seven Sacraments; Protestants that there are only two. But in his judgment Protestants are entirely inconsistent in limiting the number to two—baptism and the Communion. They should add another, and also observe the washing of the saints' feet. His views are as follows :

“But to give a further evidence, how these consequences have not any bottom from the practice of that ceremony [the breaking of bread as done by Christ the night he was betrayed], nor from the words following: ‘Do this,’ &c., let us consider another of a like nature, as it is at length expressed by John, chap. xiii: 4–15. As to which, let it be observed, that John relates this passage to have been done at the same time with the other of breaking bread; both being done the night of the Passover after supper. If we regard the narration of this, and the circumstances attending it, it was done with far more solemnity, and prescribed far more punctually and particularly than the former. It is said only: ‘As he was eating he took bread,’ so that this would seem to be but an occasional business; but here he rose up, he laid by his garments, he girded himself, he poured out the water, he washed their feet, he wiped them with the towel, he did this to all of them; which are circumstances surely far more observable than those noted in the other. The former was a practice common among the Jews, used by all masters of families upon that occasion; but this, as to the manner, and person acting it, to wit: For the master to rise up and wash the feet of his servants and disciples, was more singular and observable. In the breaking of bread, and giving of wine, it is not pleaded by our adversaries, nor yet mentioned in the text, that he particularly put them into the hands of all; but breaking it and blessing it, gave it the nearest, and so they from hand to hand; but here it is mentioned that he washed not the feet of one or two, but of many. He saith not in the former, that if they do not eat of that bread, and drink of that wine, they should be prejudiced by it, but here he says expressly to Peter, that if he wash him not,

he hath no part with him ; which being spoken upon Peter's refusing to let him wash his feet, would seem to impart no less, than not the countinuanee only, but even the necessity of this ceremony. In the former he saith, as it were passingly : ' Do this in remembrance of me ; ' but here he sitteth down again, he desires them to consider what he hath done, tells them positively, that as he hath done to them, so ought they to do to one another ; and yet again, he redoubles that precept by telling them he has given them an example, that they should do so likewise. If we respect the nature of the thing, it hath as much in it as either baptism or the breaking of bread ; seeing it is an outward element of a cleansing nature, applied to the outward man, by the command and example of Christ, to signify an inward purifying.

" I would willingly propose this seriously to them who will be pleased to make use of that reason and understanding that God hath given them, and not be imposed upon, nor abased by the custom and tradition of others : Whether this ceremony, if we respect either the time it was appointed in, or the circumstances wherewith it was performed, or the command enjoining the use of it, hath not as much to recommend it for a standing ordinance of the Gospel, as either water baptism, or bread and wine, or any other of that kind ? I wonder then what reason Papists can give, why they have not numbered it among their sacraments, except merely *voluntas ecclesiæ* and *traditio Patrum*. But if they say that it is used among them, in that the Pope, and some other persons among them, used to do it once a year to some poor people ; I would willingly know what reason they have why this should not be extended to all, as well as that of the Eucharist, as they term

it; or whence it appears from the text, that, 'Do this in remembrance of me,' should be interpreted that the bread and wine were every day to be taken by all priests, or the bread every day, or every week, by the people; and that that other command of Christ: 'Ye ought to do as I have done to you,' is only to be understood of the Pope, or some other persons, to be done only to a few, and that once a year. [The answer is, their Councils prohibited the washing of feet.] Surely there can be no other reason for this difference assigned from the text. And as to Protestants, who use not this ceremony at all, if they will but open their eyes, they will see how that by custom and tradition they are abused in this matter, as were their fathers in divers Popish traditions. For if we look into the plain Scripture, what can be thence inferred to urge the one, which may not be likewise pleaded for the other; or for laying aside the one, which may not be likewise said against the continuance of the other? If they say that the former, of washing the feet, was only a ceremony; what have they whence they can show that the breaking of bread is more? If they say, that the former was only a sign of humility; what have they to prove that this was more? If they say that one was only for a time, and was no evangelical ordinance; what hath this to make it such, that the other wanted? Surely there is no way of reason to evade this; neither can anything be alleged that the one should cease and not the other; or the one continue, and not the other, but the mere opinion of the affirmer; which by custom, education and tradition, hath begotten in the hearts of people a greater reverence for and esteem of, the one than the other; which if it had fallen out to be as much recommended to us by tradition, would no doubt

have been as tenaciously pleaded for as having no less foundation in Scripture. But since the former, to wit: The washing of one another's feet, is justly laid aside, as not binding upon Christians, so ought also the other for the same reason" (*Barclay's Apology*, published A. D. 1675, pp. 433-436).



CHAPTER VI.

Dr. William Bohmer on Feet-washing.

WE have seen how an unbiased Quaker regards the Scriptural authority for feet-washing in contrast with the same authority for the Communion and baptism. Such testimony is extremely valuable, and should have much more weight than the most learned and convincing argument from an interested party. The Quaker, who rejects all formal ordinances, is in the best possible position to judge equitably of the claims of feet-washing to the rank and dignity of an ordinance of religion. And he decides without hesitation, and in the most positive terms, that no other rite can be more strongly supported in God's word than this commonly rejected one.

We shall now produce a witness whose religious faith differs widely from that of the Quaker, but who has carefully and critically examined the claims of feet-washing to be classed among the Christian ordinances. This writer is Dr. William Bohmer, of Breslau, Prussia. In a learned article, published in the *Theologische Studien und Kritiken*, A. D. 1850, p. 829-842, he considers "*Feet-washing According to its Sacramental Dignity.*" The *Christian Review*

speaks of the journal from which this article is taken as "beyond all doubt the most learned theological journal in the world." Dr. Bohmer speaks exclusively as a critical scholar, and not as a partisan or an apologist; and his conclusions merit the most serious consideration. We quote him in full, as follows:

"When the question is to understand the Protestant Church doctrine on the number of the Christian sacraments, the opinions of individual church teachers must not be regarded, even in the case that the last should be reformers. Individual church teachers do not build the Protestant Church. Opinions expressed by individual church teachers have not always been publicly sanctioned by the church. Its doctrine on the number of the sacraments is only to be determined from the Scriptures, which the church has acknowledged through the symbols. What pertains to the Reformed side of the Protestant Church, baptism and the Lord's supper, are represented in the twenty-fifth article of the Anglican Church as the sacraments instituted by Christ. If we look on the Lutheran side of that church there are, it is true, three sacraments set down in the *Apology of the Augsburg Confession*, p. 200 and p. 167; the *Lutheran Confession of Faith*, Rechenberg's edition, consisting of baptism, the Lord's supper, and absolution, which last appears as the sacrifice of RENAME (Busze). On p. 200 we find offered as reason for this representation, that the three named acts have for themselves a divine command, and a promise of grace proper to the New Testament. The mind, it is said, must accept with certainty that God in baptism, the taking of the Lord's body, in absolution, does really for Christ's sake forgive them [their sins]. Nevertheless, it is contended in the Larger Catechism, p. 549: 'Baptism embraces, as well through its power as through its signifi-

cation, also, the sacrament which men are accustomed to call Rename. Properly. Rename is nothing else than baptism, or the exercise of it. How then can Rename be otherwise defined than thus: That it is a full-drawn attack with a strong spirit on the old man in behalf of curbing his passions, and an embracing of the new life? He who lives in Rename, moves himself in baptism which not only signifies this new life, but also works, begins, exercises. For in baptism is given to candidates the grace, the spirit and the power to bend the old man, that the new may go forth and be strengthened.' These reasons of the catechism, and the circumstance that the reforming weight of its author, Luther, was considerably more in the Lutheran Church than the reforming weight of the author of the *Apology*, Milanthon's, make it clear why this Church really abandoned the sacramental dignity of Rename, and even as the Reformed Association, only set down baptism and the Lord's supper as sacraments.

"That the Protestant Church, according to its Reformed and Lutheran side, has rejected Rename as a sacrament, deserves by no means any blame. Rename, as a sacrament, lacks an essential element of a sacrament—the sensuous matter [*der Sinnliche stoff*]. It is true the Council of Trent, in the fourteenth session, chap. iii, is of the opinion that the exercises of the penitent themselves, namely, contrition, confession and satisfaction, are, as it were, the matter of the sacrament of Rename. But the opinion is strange, as these exercises, according to their preponderating spiritual nature, are not proper to form the sensuous matter of a sacrament. The Council itself seems to have found this work so, for it leaves those exercises to be the '*quasi materia huius sacramenti*.' Let the Roman Catechism (Pars II, chap. v, qst. 14) wish to know every kind of

satisfaction on prayer, fasting and alms reduced by the ministers! Also, prayer and fasting are, according to their nature, such a self-abstraction of the material that a thoughtful mind cannot reckon either to be the '*quasi materia*' of a sacrament [that which comes in place of the sensuous element]. Moreover, as that opinion of the Council finds no foundation in the word of God, the Holy Scriptures, it must not be admitted, as the word of God is the product of a thoughtful, yea, divine mind.

"Farther, the Protestant Church, in the view that it has represented baptism and the Lord's supper as sacraments, deserves, by no means, any blame.

"Under a sacrament we must imagine to ourselves a holy ceremony, instituted immediately or mediately by Christ, in which are observable a sensuous matter and spiritual blessings in such a manner that these blessings, susceptible personalities, are not simply represented, but communicated through the appropriation of the sensuous matter. Every other conception of a sacrament is insufficient, because it does not answer to the nature of a sacrament. In baptism and the Lord's supper, however, all the elements of a sacrament appear. Baptism and the Lord's supper are, according to Matt. xxviii: 19; xxvi: 26 *et seq.*, instituted by Christ. Both have in the water, and in the bread, with which is joined the wine of the cup (Matt. xxvi: 26 *et seq.*) their sensuous matter. Forgiveness of sins and the Holy Spirit are spiritual blessings which belong to baptism (Acts ii: 28). The body and blood of Jesus (Matt. xxvi: 26-28, *q. d.*; the divine Logos, who in Jesus took up the body and blood in the oneness with himself, John i: 14) constitute the spiritual blessings of the Lord's supper. At length those adults who have embraced the Christian faith (Col. ii: 12), in that they are immersed in the baptismal water,

receive forgiveness of sin and the Holy Spirit (Acts ii: 38), the rather in part, as the baptismal water is united with God's word (Eph. v: 26). And those personalities who, through self-examination (1 Cor. xi: 28), have learned that they are in a worthy frame of mind, become translated into communion with the body and blood of the Lord, *q. d.*, with the divine Logos, who pervades the body and blood; in this that they partake of the elements of the Lord's supper, namely bread and wine blessed through the word of God (1 Cor. x: 16).

"On the other hand, the Protestant Church must be blamed in the reference that it has only determined baptism and the Lord's supper as sacraments. The determination contains an injustice against the feet-washing of Christ, as it is described at large in John xiii. According to the description, sacramental dignity belongs also to *Feet-washing*. All the elements of a sacrament present themselves sufficiently clear to an unbiased mind.

"First. Feet-washing took its origin immediately from Christ. Although knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that as he came from God so he would again return to him, Christ arose from table before he ate with his Disciples that well-known and significant meal before his last Passover (John xiii: 1, 2, 26). After he had laid aside his outer garments and had girded himself with a towel (*leintuche*), he poured water into a wash-basin and began to wash his Disciples' feet and wipe them with a towel. Let us suppose, however, that Christ had washed his Disciples' feet through another person. This circumstance would have injured the sacramental dignity of feet-washing no more than the fact that he, being engaged in the fulfillment of his prophetic work, had baptized other

persons through his Disciples (John iv : 1, 2), injured the sacramental dignity of baptism.

“Secondly. Feet-washing possesses, like baptism, in the water the sensuous matter, which is necessary to a sacrament, because this shall both exert an influence on the sensuous side of man and contribute to the sanctification of the same. The sensuous matter of feet-washing recommends itself on account of its simplicity. It renders it possible to practice feet-washing as a sacrament in all climates. And when thereat the arrangement is made that men wash the feet of men, and women of women, Christian shamefacedness is preserved in a pleasing manner.”

“Thirdly. That spiritual blessings are by no means wanting is clear from the context in the xiiith of John’s Gospel. As Jesus began to wash the Disciples’ feet he also came to Peter. As feet-washing, as a servile work, according to the opinion of this Apostle, did not become Jesus the Lord, so Peter, full of astonishment at his conduct, started the question : ‘Lord, dost thou wash my feet?’ And as Jesus replied, what he was doing that Peter knew not then, yet he would understand it thereafter ; then this one who was prevented from taking to heart properly that reply through natural passionateness, proceeded with the decisive declaration that Jesus should never wash his feet. In consequence of such a contradiction, Jesus uttered with greater precision than he had yet done : ‘If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me ; *q. d.*, no lot in the union with me (*vs.* 6–8). Do we change this thoroughly negative assertion into an affirmative in such a manner that no real point is lost ? And Jesus gives the opposing Apostle to understand, if I wash your feet (which only could have taken place in the event that that Apostle humbled himself before the Lord) thou hast a part with me, a lot in the

union with me. This spiritual union of himself with the Lord, *which is brought about through feet-washing*, forms one of those spiritual blessings which hang together in such a manner in feet-washing that they essentially help this ceremony to sacramental dignity. Besides one other, we also obtain from the context of the Gospel the wished-for light. In the innermost depth of his personality, moved by the assertion of the Lord in question, Peter declares according to his personal disposition, by which the leap from one extreme into the other was only too natural: The Lord might not only wash his feet, but also his hands and his head! Hereupon Jesus answered: He that has once washed (namely, as to his whole body) has need of nothing farther than this, that he wash his feet (since the feet only have become soiled through this, that he who is washed has again walked on the earth; perhaps has taken a journey). He is (without respect to his feet) wholly clean. In this illustration of Jesus an imaginary thought undoubtedly impresses itself upon the mind, but at the bottom of the imaginary thought lies the real: The man who has made to himself a moral-pious mind, and is overwhelmed in it, *q. d.*, is altogether clean; it is only necessary for him to be cleansed in reference to single spots with which his personality is yet infected. Without respecting these single spots, he is, what respects the moral-pious side wholly clean, as in verse 10. Accordingly this belongs to the spiritual blessings which are united through the glorious arrangement of Jesus at feet-washing, wherewith it becomes a Sacrament, that he whose feet are washed is cleansed in reference to certain spots, with which his pervaded spirit is yet furnished, by a moral-pious mind. How well this blessing agrees with the one which we above reckoned as a spiritual blessing of the ceremony in question is clear from the

circumstances that there is no real union of the spirit of man with Christ without that it exerts a beneficial influence upon the gradual cleansing of the spirit from its spots.

"Fourthly. To the water, which constitutes the sensuous matter of feet-washing, the word of God is united, which both testifies of Christ and is able to improve the susceptible spirit (John xiii: 8-10). The fact is the more comprehensible that the union of the spirit with Christ, and also the cleansing of the spirit from the filth of sin yet adhering to it, is brought about through the water. This appearance would only then be incomprehensible if the word of God were not joined to the water, and the spirit would not be susceptible to the influence of the word, consequently not believing.

"Notwithstanding that according to the above explanation all the elements of a Christian sacrament appear in the feet-washing of Christ, theologians of modern times have brought forward many arguments against the sacramental dignity of this *beautiful* religious practice. Nevertheless, an unprejudiced critic can prove without difficulty that these arguments cannot deprive the practice of that its own dignity. 'The act of feet-washing,' say the theologians, 'was *symbolical*, to enjoin the duty of Christian love and serviceableness (according to oriental custom) on his (*i. e.*, Christ's) Disciples.' Now, with regard to John xiii: 12, *et seq.*, we would not wish to deny such a symbolical reference of the act of Christ. Indeed, he says, emphatically, if he, although he was the Lord and Teacher of his Disciples, washed their feet as they should also wash one another's feet, he gave them therewith an example to be imitated (*hupodeigma*, see on the import of the word James v: 10). We might here also adduce the weighty text, Luke xxii: 26, 27, in which, although nothing of feet-washing as an

act of Christ strikes the eye, yet the discourse is of that serving spirit in which Christ, according to John's Gospel, had washed the Disciples' feet. But this, that the act in question was symbolical, and to enjoin the duty of Christian love and serviceableness, does surely in no way exclude the sacramental dignity of this act. Much more that symbolical reference of the act and this sacramental character stand in close connection with each other. As Christ in that he should wash his Disciples' feet, and in this way should show Christian love and serviceableness; so the Disciples, while Christ was washing their feet, could obtain through this, by a supposed believing surrender to Christ, a lot in the spiritual union with him, and the cleansing of single spots which adhered to them, *q. d.*, the *res sacramenti*. He who conceives of the act in question only as a symbolical act, and not at the same time as a sacramental, entangles himself in a one-sidedness by which that act does not receive its full just due.

"It is true the theologians named further present the objection that the act was also 'never ordained by the Apostles as a law for all Christians and all times.' Yet the justness of this objection is by no means beyond all doubt. Let the New Testament Scriptures not relate that the Apostles have ordained feet-washing as a law for all Christians and all times; yet this want does not necessarily exclude that the Apostles left verbally such an ordinance, for there is also much that Jesus really did that has not been recorded in the Apostolic Scriptures (John xxi: 25). That the Apostles, with respect to feet-washing, which Christ, according to John xiii: 14, 15, gave them for a pattern, left the ordinance in question, is the more probable, as they were required by Jesus (Matt. xxviii: 20) to teach all nations all things which he had commanded them. And the

Apostles bore too great honor in their breasts toward their Lord and Teacher as that they would not have obeyed his commands. This probability finds a point of support in the circumstance that the Apostle of the Gentiles (1 Tim. v), as one of the many conditions under which a widow should be regarded worthy of aid through Christian church gifts, places this, that the widows have washed the feet of saints, *q. d.*, of the Christians consecrated to God (1 Tim. v: 9, 10). The feet-washing of the widow is regarded here as a beautiful and good work among others; but this characteristic of feet-washing does certainly not necessarily exclude that it was at the same time a religious (*Gottesdienstliche*) and sacramental act. Besides, feet-washing has been a custom in very many churches which have flourished since the Apostles, in Milan and in Africa, as is learned from the memorials of Christian antiquity.

“However, let us once suppose feet-washing was never enjoined by the Apostles as a law for all Christians and all times. It is still an irrefutable fact that feet-washing was ordained as a sacrament and as an emblematical act by Christ for the Apostles. But as everything that was ordained for the Apostles is also ordained for all Christians of all times (Matt. at the mentioned place), so it belongs to all Christians of all times to hold fast this holy duty, feet-washing, as such an act even as it is described by us; and where for insufficient reasons it has not been established, there to introduce it.

“Olshausen says with respect to the words of Christ on the act in question, that ‘they are the spirit and life, and must be received with spirit and life.’ But Olshausen arbitrarily overlooks how the words of the Lord in John xiii: 10–15 are in such a manner spirit and life that they at the same time ordain the external performance of feet-

washing as a religious duty. According to this the words are to be received entirely with spirit and life, but at the same time so that the external performance of feet-washing, of which as a religious duty the words also treat, be brought about.

“It is true many theologians have attempted to prove the internal necessity of only ‘two sacraments to embrace the whole life of a Christian church,’ which are baptism and the Lord’s supper. And had the attempt succeeded, the sacrament of feet-washing would be superfluous for the church, notwithstanding that feet-washing also is an emblematical moral act. But the attempt has failed, and on that account the sacrament of feet-washing dare not be set down as superfluous. So Marheineke attempts to base this necessity of only two sacraments by these remarks: ‘Each one must in his natural life be a member of the church and *become* so more and more. He must *once for always* be consecrated to God, and as a natural plant be transplanted out of the bad soil of the earth into the good ground and soil of the kingdom of heaven, and then be consecrated *always* anew in order to grow in Christ, *i. e.*, in faith and love.’ Now we grant entirely to Marheineke that these remarks are right in themselves. We further grant that the necessity of baptism bases itself on this, that each one who is concerned about the ‘truth, morality and happiness,’ to be found in the church must, in his natural life, be a member of the church, once for always be consecrated to God, and like a natural plant be transplanted out of the bad soil of the earth into the divine ground and soil of the kingdom of heaven, *q. d.*, the church.

“However, Marheineke is, in our judgment, in error in that he represents as necessary for that only the sacrament of the Lord’s supper, because each one must also become

more and more a member of the church, and always be consecrated anew in order to grow in Christ, *i. e.*, in faith and love: For likewise the sacrament of feet-washing has even for this its internal necessity. Indeed, each one is a personality, a unit of understanding, of free will and of feeling. Yet the more different the personalities of the members of the church are shaped by every identity of the being (*wesens*) of the personalities, the more is it necessary that more and, indeed, different sacraments be at hand, through the believing appropriation of which the members of the church become more and more members of the church and always become consecrated anew to God in behalf of the growth in question. The Lord's supper alone is, even if it be frequently repeated, not sufficient for the attainment of this pious and moral end, because of the difference which shows itself in the personalities of the members of the church. Therefore the feet-washing of Christ as such a sacrament was adjoined to the Lord's supper by the Holy Scriptures, through the performance of which that end can be secured, in that those Christians whose feet are washed obtain lot in the union with Christ, in which God is as a Father, and are freed from single spots, with which Christians are disfigured.

"That the Protestant Church has *not acknowledged the feet-washing of Christ as a sacrament is an offense against the Holy Scriptures*, which surprises the more as this Church discovers the origin of its Christianity, and the only rule of conduct of its faith and practices, in the Holy Scriptures. The Church can, to some extent, make amends for its only offense through this, *that it gives the feet-washing of Christ full justice as it is represented in the Scriptures, q. d., acknowledge its sacramental dignity.*"

The foregoing translation is the work of one of our in-

timate personal friends of earlier years, a scholar and a conscientious Christian gentleman, since deceased. For the integrity of the translator we can vouch unhesitatingly; but the translation as here given is manifestly a defective one, owing either to the compositors who put it in type some seventeen years ago, or to the translator's imperfect knowledge of the German language. But the author's ideas are given in the main with clearness and force.

Of the critical correctness of Dr. Bohmer's position there can be little reasonable doubt. For when the three ordinances of baptism, feet-washing and the Communion are compared in the basis of principles upon which they stand no sound criticism can reject one without invalidating the other. And it is for this invincible reason that we accept the three as divinely instituted ordinances of the Christian church. The difference, then, between trine immersion and feet-washing is manifest. In the former case we ascend the stream of history to the time of Tertullian. Beyond that there are no authentic and positive traces of it. We stand upon some towering mountain top and listen, turning our inquiring eyes toward the hills among which echoed the voice of the great Teacher, intent on catching the faintest iteration of the command to practice a threefold baptism. But silence, profound and oppressive, everywhere reigns. Our inquiry is changed. We would know whether the washing of the saints' feet as a ritual, symbolical, religious act should be practiced. Again we go up the stream of history until we reach a point but little nearer the period in which Christ lived and taught than where we stood before. A waste of nearly a century lies between us and the Apostolic church, and beyond which Christ stands. Let us listen again! There are voices in the air! They speak of "washing the *saints'* feet." They clearly

say: "Ye ought to do it"; "ye should do as I have done." Whence come they? Whose are these voices? We have heard them before! We know them. Down the ages rings the voice of the Lord Jesus: "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you, for if I, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet." And this voice is increased in volume by that of Paul. We are satisfied! We will cheerfully do what Jesus has said we "ought" to do. When he commands, our hearts are silent and submissive. Hence, over this beautiful and expressive service we pronounce the words: AN ORDINANCE OF THE LORD'S OWN INSTITUTION.



PART III.

THE LOVE-FEAST AND THE COMMUNION.



CHAPTER I.

The Questions Stated.

IT is one of the singular facts of ecclesiastical history that around the one ordinance above all others which our Lord instituted as a memorial of his marvelous love, the fiercest and most prolonged contentions should have taken place. What is commonly known as the Lord's Supper has been the subject of controversy in nearly all ages of the Christian church; and the questions in dispute are still as far as ever from being definitely and satisfactorily settled. Sometimes, too, the questions at issue relate not so much to the ordinance itself as to forms and observances connected therewith. Among several Churches it is customary to eat a full meal in connection with the Communion and immediately preceding it. For this practice, it is claimed, there is divine authority, so that it is regarded as being equally obligatory to eat the full meal and to break bread in the Communion.

Where the Church of God comes in contact with people holding the view here indicated it is but natural that inquiries should arise touching the reasons which govern us in the rejection of this full meal as a religious institution. With them we teach the doctrine of the immersion of be-

lievers as constituting Christian baptism, dissenting only from the threefold mode in which by them the baptism is administered. We observe the Communion of the body and the blood of Christ, as they do, without any attempt at an elucidation of this Christian mystery beyond what it pleased the great Author and Head of the church himself to give; and we can join with them in teaching and practicing the most expressive and significant of all the acknowledged Christian ordinances, when fully understood, as witnessed in the washing of the saints' feet. Naturally enough the question is repeatedly suggested and pressed upon us for an answer: Why do you not eat a full meal before, and in connection with, the Communion? In the view of those who solicit an answer to this question there seem to be ample reasons for pressing it upon us. We do not hesitate to affirm our determination to accept every institution and to conform to every precept which emanated from Christ. We do not deem it amiss to censure those who either reject or modify divine ordinances, or who teach and practice that which has no divine warrant. But those who ask us for a reason for omitting the full meal in connection with the Communion believe that it is a divine institution; that Christ not only partook with his Disciples of a full meal on the night when he instituted the Communion, but that it was a special meal ordered to be prepared for the occasion, and subsequently observed in obedience to his will. This full meal they claim is the Lord's Supper, while the breaking of bread and the cup which follow constitute the Communion.

In view of these facts it would naturally appear clear to them that we err in not eating the full meal before we partake of the Communion. Also that this assumed error is the more aggravated since we insist so positively upon

doing all that Christ has enjoined upon the church; and claim that it is the highest duty of the follower of Jesus to seek to know his will and then unfalteringly to do it. And none the less does this alleged neglect of a Divine institution seem unpardonable since we have received the truth with reference to what might with almost singular appropriateness be called The Lost Ordinance of the Christian church—the rite of washing the saints' feet. But however others may view the matter, to us it is explicable in the most natural manner. Whether right or wrong, our action in reference to this alleged Divine institution is governed by our invariable rule in all similar cases. What we believe to be the command of the Great Head of the church, touching rites and ceremonies, we observe, no matter what it is, or how little it may commend itself to natural human reason; and nothing else do we observe.

The Communion being so commonly called the Lord's Supper, it is supposed not infrequently that this has contributed to the neglect of the full meal. With others we are charged with this confusion of names. It is claimed that the bread and wine are not the Lord's Supper, and that this term originally and properly designated the full meal partaken of immediately preceding the breaking of the bread and the cup. When the full meal was dispensed with, which it is asserted was the Lord's Supper, this name was retained to designate the Communion; and thus we do not eat the Lord's Supper at all, but partake simply of the Communion which we have called the Lord's Supper. One Divine institution has been lost, and its name has been applied indiscriminately with others to another Divine institution. It is at once apparent, therefore, that this is not a mere question of names, but of an institution which, it is claimed, we reject. The question which we hence propos

to discuss is this: "Is the Love-feast, which by some is called the Lord's Supper, a Divine institution to be perpetually observed by the Church?" As a question of minor importance we will also seek to justify the application of the name Lord's Supper to the Communion.

That there may be no confusion of terms we will here state, that, throughout this discussion, we shall use the name *Agape* for the full meal and *Communion* for the bread and the cup, which are more commonly called the Lord's Supper. In doing this we have no object in view save clearness in our statements and our reasonings. By common consent *Communion* is a suitable and proper name for the service and ordinance to which we here apply it. We are most generally in the habit of calling it the Lord's Supper, but as those who hold the views which we feel obliged to antagonize apply that name to the full meal, our use of it here to designate what they call the *Communion* might occasion confusion.

Having for the sake of clearness surrendered the name most familiar among us for the *Communion*, it cannot be objected that we are dealing unfairly by obliging the other side to accept temporarily a name which antiquity so fully justifies us in giving to the full meal which they claim to be the Lord's Supper. Hence without prejudice to the interests of either party to this controversy we shall, as above stated, call the full meal which certain churches eat in connection with breaking of bread and the cup *Agape* and the bread and wine we shall call the *Communion*. Let none lose sight of this nomenclature, nor forget that no controversial significance is to be attached to the terms which we have selected to designate these different things. *Love-feast*, the term which occurs on the title page, is only the translation of the Greek *Agape*.

In the discussion of this question our supreme aim shall be to ascertain the will of the Lord. It is true that we, as a people, have an established practice touching this matter. From the first down to the present time we have invariably held it to be our duty to commemorate the sufferings and death of the Lord Jesus in the ordinance of the Communion; and have as invariably and generally held that the *Agape* is not a divine institution, and so have not observed it. Our individual faith is perfectly in harmony with this practice; and though we have on several occasions investigated the subject with much care, and have now again gone over the whole ground with conscientious painstaking, our faith remains unshaken in the correctness of our position. But, as a constant check to our own mind, and the better to prepare our readers for what they will find in this discussion, we place this guiding principle at the very beginning of our investigation: That the divine will, as found in the Scriptures, must be our supreme rule.

The Scriptures are our only rule of faith and practice, so that whatever is not found therein, nor may be proved thereby, cannot be required of us. If we can find the *Agape* as a divine institution in the word of God then our past faith and practice will have to go for nothing, and we shall adopt what hitherto we have rejected. But in our discussion of the subject we shall not confine ourself wholly to the Scriptures, as it may be profitable to follow the history and examine the literature of the *Agape* as we find it in the post-Apostolic times. The propriety of doing so is fully sustained by the most learned men on other subjects; and besides, in doing so we are but following our opponents into fields whither they have long since preceded us.

In developing this subject we propose the following order of discussion :

I. The Communion, consisting of "the bread which we break" and "the cup of blessing which we bless," is an accepted and acknowledged institution of the Lord Jesus to be perpetually observed by the church to the end of time.

II. The Agape in sacred and ecclesiastical history.

III. Is there divine authority for the perpetual observance of the Agape as a religious ordinance?

IV. The proper name whereby to designate the Communion.

Under these four heads it now seems to us we can very properly arrange everything that we need to say on the general subject before us. And the order of topics is, to our mind, one which, if not the best in itself, will conduce to clearness of argumentation and to a right apprehension of the whole subject. These are requisites which are to be valued above any apparent demands of logical order.



CHAPTER II.

The Communion a Divine Institution Complete in Itself.

IN the concluding paragraph of Chapter I, we gave the order in which we proposed to discuss our subject. According to that order the first point to claim our attention is thus stated :

I. The Communion, consisting of "the bread which we break" and "the cup of blessing which we bless," is an accepted and acknowledged institution of the Lord Jesus to be perpetually observed by the church to the end of time.

Were we discussing this question by itself, and not in view of the fact that the *Agape* is also claimed to be a divine institution, it would be necessary neither to adduce proof of this proposition, nor to explain and elucidate it. Save among Roman Catholics and Quakers our proposition is unchallenged. The former would eliminate the cup from the Communion, and the latter would reject the ordinance entirely. The doctrine of what is called *Concomitance*, according to which the bread used in the Communion is changed unto the *flesh and blood* of our Lord, obviates the necessity of communing in both elements. It is the most ultra doctrine of Transubstantiation, and is held and practiced only by the Catholic church.

The Quakers, as is well-known, do not believe in ritual institutions at all. They regard them in a spiritual light. They teach that "the baptism that now saves is inward and spiritual; that true Christians are 'baptized by one Spirit into one body,' " and that there is now no other baptism. And respecting the Communion of the body and blood of our Lord, they believe it to be "a real participation of the divine nature through faith in him and obedience to the power of the Holy Ghost."

With these, however, we are not concerned in this discussion. We are, in various ways, challenged to show reason for not observing the *Agape*, and that by those who believe it to be a divine institution. Accordingly, we must discuss the subject with an intelligent consciousness of the point at issue.

It will not be demanded of us to adduce proof of our proposition from the great body of Protestant Christians. With exceptional unanimity do Protestants agree touching the Communion. They may believe differently relative to the doctrine of the Communion. Some may hold to consubstantiation, while others repudiate this doctrine. Some may believe in a mystical real presence, and others may deny such a doctrine. Some may accept the doctrine of sanctifying grace as being conferred in the Communion, while others have no such faith. To some it may be a sacrifice as well as a sacrament, while to others it is neither. Some make of it chiefly a memorial service, while to others such a view would seem utterly inadequate. But on one point, with individual exceptions, they are united. They alike testify that the bread which we break is the Communion of the body of Christ, and the cup of blessing which we bless is the Communion of the blood of Christ; and that the Communion is complete in this, and that there

is not connected with it another institution equally obligatory, which is called *Agape*. They believe in the one single and simple ordinance as we have thus characterized it, and not in two to be observed together, nor in a twofold one.

From this position there are those who in honesty and sincerity dissent, holding that the *Agape* is obligatory alike with the Communion. But the question of present moment is this: Do they concede that the Communion is what we have described it to be, an institution distinct from the *Agape*, covered by a different name and only connected by juxtaposition of time and place with the *Agape*? If so, then our proposition is established, and we celebrate the Scriptural Communion, even if the *Agape* is a Divine institution. Our error then consists in this, that whereas Christ instituted two ordinances in connection with one another, but not dependent upon each other for their validity, we only observe the one, that is, the Communion.

That those who insist that the *Agape* is a Divine institution yet concede that it is separate and distinct from, and not a part, of the Communion, we learn from their own testimony. We would not attribute such a position to them simply because *we* view the two observances as entirely distinct. Hence, we need proof on this point. We need to cite witnesses from among the friends of this rite which we reject, who will testify that it is distinct from the Communion. And we think that such witnesses are at hand, who will, by their evidence, establish the correctness of Worcester's idea of the *Agape* when he calls it "a feast of charity, common among the primitive Christians, and celebrated in connection with the Lord's Supper [Communion], but not as a necessary part of it."

Such a conclusion, fortunately for the purpose now in

view, cannot be made to depend upon the uncertainties of dialectic science. On the contrary, we claim to have the most direct, positive and unequivocal testimony touching this point. We will confine ourself to the testimony of two witnesses. We shall quote first from a work entitled "Passover and Lord's Supper." The author of this book is J. W. Beer, V. D. M., an honored and worthy member of the Brethren Church. By the Lord's Supper as used in the title of his book, and, indeed, throughout the book, Elder Beer means the *Agape*. In various ways does he concede that the *Agape* is distinct from the Communion, but more particularly in the following quotations: "The 'feasts of charity' were observed in connection with the 'bread and wine'" (page 219). "They [the love-feasts] were observed in connection with the bread and wine—the Communion of the body and blood of the Lord" (page 220). "Be it remembered, therefore, that the simple fact that these authors call the bread and wine the Lord's Supper is no evidence at all that the Eucharist was called the Lord's Supper before the feast, or supper proper, was faithlessly discarded" (Ibid). "The primitive Christians, both in and after Apostolic times, did observe a full meal [*Agape*] in connection with the Eucharist, or bread and wine" (p. 225). "Now, just as certain as it is that the going into Galilee here spoken of [referring to Matt. xxvi: 32] followed the consummation of the resurrection, and constituted no part of the resurrection, so certain is it that the cup *after* supper followed the consummation of the supper, and that it formed no part of the supper. * * * They did have a supper on that night, but both the elements of the Eucharist were taken *after* supper and were no part of it; and consequently the Eucharist, consisting of these elements, was no part of the supper" (p. 228). "If one of the ordinances only is to

be designated [meaning the *Agape* and the Communion] let the appropriate name be used."

Here, then, two ordinances are spoken of, and it is specifically stated that the one is not a part of the other. They are separate and distinct, except in time and place, but are no more to be identified than feet-washing and the Communion. The observance of the one cannot answer for both; neither is the observance of the one incomplete in itself without the other.

To this testimony we add a few words from a work entitled: "A Debate on Trine Immersion, the Lord's Supper and Feet-washing." The German Baptists were represented in this debate by Elder James Quinter, one of their most efficient ministers and a leading editor of one of their periodicals. In his first address on the Lord's Supper he says: "The Apostolic church had, in connection with the symbols of the body and blood of Christ [Communion], a meal or supper" [*Agape*]. "The meal or supper that was eaten, and not the bread and wine [Communion], was the Lord's Supper" [*Agape*]. "The text (II Peter ii: 14) shows most conclusively that the church at that time had a feast; they had an eating [*Agape*]; different from, distinct from, the eating of the symbols of the body and blood of our Lord [Communion]. "After an economical and moderate supper [*Agape*], they partook of the Lord's body and blood" [Communion].

From this testimony the same conclusion follows which we were warranted in drawing from Elder Beer's testimony, viz: That, according to the views entertained by the author, there are two ordinances, the Supper [*Agape*] and the Communion; and that they are separate and distinct, except in time and place. In the Communion alone we partake of the body and blood of the Lord. Hence, those

who do not keep the *Agape* still keep one of these two ordinances—that one in which the Lord's body and blood are partaken of. The neglect to keep the *Agape* may be the discarding of a divine ordinance; but it does not vitiate the celebration of the Communion, provided we are disciples of Jesus in our error.

Not only does the direct testimony of these two worthy brethren lead to this conclusion; but in all their labored arguments they never once intimate a vital connection between these two services. They do say that we do not observe the Lord's Supper [*Agape*], but they fail to say that we do not observe the Communion; and the Communion is specifically the partaking "of the Lord's body and blood." There must hence be two distinct ordinances; so far two, at least, that if in our honest ignorance we can see but one, and are still the Lord's, our participation of the one is not vitiated by our non-observance of the other. So we read these two authors from which we have quoted. So testify all the ancient authorities. Hence, our conclusion, legitimately reached, is that the Communion, consisting of "the bread which we break" and "the cup of blessing which we bless," is an accepted and acknowledged institution of the Lord Jesus to be perpetually observed by the church to the end of time. This Communion we observe in what we customarily call the Lord's Supper.

But if this conclusion is not only legitimately drawn from the testimony of these witnesses, but is also in harmony with the Scriptures; then it follows that there must be two separate and distinct acts of institution; two precepts commanding the observance of these two separate ordinances. The words of institution for the Communion can readily be cited. After our Lord had broken the bread and given it to his Disciples he said: "This is my body

which is given for you; this do in remembrance of me." In passing the cup to his Disciples our Lord said: "Drink ye all of it, for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins." The Gospels contain nothing besides which can be construed into an instituting act for the Communion. That these words amount to a precept of perpetual obligation is nowhere denied, except by the Quakers, as above indicated. But they institute the Communion, and not the *Agape* and the Communion. • So that if the *Agape* was also instituted as an ordinance we must look elsewhere for the words of institution. Whether these can be found will be developed in subsequent chapters.



CHAPTER III.

Paul, Peter and Jude on the Agape.

IT is a concession to the advocates of the *Agape* to introduce, at this stage of the discussion, the question of its historical observance. Even Apostolic and patristic practice is insufficient to establish the divine origin and ritual character of an observance, how much less that of later ages. Properly, our first inquiry with reference to any service which is claimed to be an ordinance should relate to the Divine institution. The present case is no exception. Did Christ institute the *Agape*? Did he by precept and example indicate it to be his will that the church in all ages should celebrate this rite? If so, then the matter is determined, and we need not concern ourselves about the historical observance of the rite. If he did not, what reason can there be for searching the records of ecclesiastical history to learn whether the Disciples in Apostolic and patristic times kept the *Agape*? Will that elevate it to the dignity of a divine institution? It cannot be so claimed.

But still our opponents demand that history shall be interrogated. With them the observance of this assumed rite in the early days of the Christian church is supposed

to raise a presumption in its favor as a Divine institution. They profess to trace it directly to the fountain-head at Jerusalem, where, during the last night of Christ with his Disciples, it is claimed the example was set which the church followed in the *Agape*. We hence propose to begin our investigation immediately subsequent to that occasion, and shall diligently inquire into the facts in the case.

In searching after historical facts we shall for the time simply state them as facts, without showing their bearing upon the point at issue. In so far, therefore, the discussion under our second division will be imperfect. But we trust that this incomplete presentation of the second part of our subject under its proper head will not prove a temptation to some to make an unjustifiable use of what we shall here say, by separating the admissions which we may make from what we may have further to say with reference to them. We are to listen here to the voice of history, sacred and ecclesiastical, touching the *Agape* and its connection with the Communion; but a mere recital of history, should we even find the *Agape* in connection with the Communion, will not be construed into proof or an admission that the *Agape* is a *Divine* institution connected with the Communion. We do not desire to conceal a line of historical testimony; but knowing what that testimony will be we are prepared to say, in advance, that it is wholly insufficient to establish the affirmation that the *Agape* was instituted by Christ, in connection with the Communion, as a perpetual ordinance.

II. *The Agape in sacred and ecclesiastical history.*

Is there any inspired testimony to the effect that the *Agape* was connected with the Communion? We do not now inquire whether there is any testimony to prove that it was instituted as an ordinance alike obligatory with the Communion. It might have been observed in Apostolic

times and still not be an ordinance. That question, however, we shall remand to our third sub-division, when we shall inquire what the Scriptures have to say as to the Divine character of this institution. We want purely historic testimony touching an alleged fact, viz: The custom of observing the *Agape* in connection with the Communion.

It is alleged that in three of the Epistles of the New Testament there is evidence sufficient to establish the fact that in the practice of the churches in Apostolic times the *Agape* and the Communion were observed together. These are the first Epistle to the Corinthians (xi); the second Epistle of Peter (ii), and the Epistle of Jude.

1. *The testimony of Paul.*

Paul's testimony, it is claimed, is found in 1 Cor. xi:18-34. The passage reads as follows:

18. "For first of all, when ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions among you, and I partly believe it.

19. For there must be also heresies among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.

20. When ye come together therefore in one place, this is not to eat the Lord's Supper.

21. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper; and one is hungry and another is drunken.

22. What? Have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? Or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not?

23. For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread;

24. And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said: Take eat; this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me.

25. After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying: This cup is the New Testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.

27. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

28. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

29. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

30. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.

31. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged.

32. But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world.

33. Wherefore, my brethren, when ye come together to eat, tarry one for another.

34. And if any man hunger, let him eat at home; that ye come not together unto condemnation."

On *the face of it* there is nothing in this section that can be regarded as evidence that the *Agape* and the Communion were celebrated together. If a student of the Bible were wholly ignorant of the *Agape* and should come to the study of this section of the Divine word, after having gone through the Gospels and Acts, what would he find in it? That is the way to test testimony so as to determine the points which it is sufficient to establish. He would find:

1. That there is something that is called the Lord's Supper.

2. Possibly that the Corinthians professed to eat this supper; but in some way vitiated their performance to such an extent that it could not be counted as eating the Lord's Supper.

3. That their public meal is rather condemned than approved; at least the manner of observing their public feast, while the intimation is very strong that they ought to do their eating at home.

4. A statement of the original institution of the Communion (but without specially giving it a name), accompanied with sundry injunctions and conclusions.

5. And the whole narrative seems to say that instead of their public feast (vs. 20-22), in which they professed to eat the Lord's Supper, the true way to observe that memorial is to follow the simplicity of the original institution (vs. 23-26), and to do their eating to satisfy hunger at home (vs. 22-34).

So much, we say, is on the face of this testimony, and whatever more it may be made to say, if it can say more, must be by the light of other testimony. If we should seek to illuminate this testimony by the light of Corinthian history we might see in this custom of the Corinthian church either a perversion of the Communion into the Grecian club feast called *eranos*, or the observance of the two together. If, on the other hand, we should go into the realm of church history for light we should gradually begin to see the *Agape* in Paul's allusions, and should conclude, as some have done, that the Corinthians so abused the *Agape* that they could not or did not observe the Communion. But which, if either, of these constructions was Paul's meaning who can determine? And, moreover,

when we have determined the construction which Paul would accept it might be of no moment so far as our present purpose is concerned, unless, indeed, this was the *Agape*, and that he approved its connection with the Communion. On this point there is a diversity of opinions, one of the best indications that the testimony is not very clear.

That Paul attempted to correct an abuse is evident, but precisely what that abuse was is difficult to determine. We could hence not accept this testimony in itself as in anywise sufficient to establish the proposition that the Corinthians observed two institutions, or that they even intended to have the *Agape* and the Communion. They did eat and drink in the assembly more than is done at the Communion; but whether their eating and drinking was to be the Communion alone, or the *Agape* alone, or the two together yet distinct, these are matters which we cannot determine from Paul's testimony. It is not even clear what he means by the term the *Lord's Supper*, although the weight of authority favors the position that this was the recognized name of the full meal which these Corinthians were accustomed to eat in their assemblies, and to eat at the appointed or stated times for the Communion.

2. *The testimony of Peter.*

This is found in the second Epistle, ii: 13. He is speaking of those who "walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness," and says of them: "Spots (they are) and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings, while they feast with you."

There is one thing very evident, so far as this testimony is concerned, that among the Christians in Asia Minor feasting with each other or together ecclesiastically was practiced. So far as Peter is concerned these feasts have

no name, for we cannot consent to exchange *apatais* (deceivings) and insert *agapais* (love-feasts) in the text. Neither is that of any consequence. But the testimony of Peter is absolutely silent as to the essential point, viz: The celebration of the Communion in connection with these ecclesiastical feasts. It is possible that among the *diaspora* to whom Peter wrote these public banquets, as Pollux explains *suneuochoumenos*, "feast with you" (II Pet. ii: 13), were held in connection with the Communion; but Peter says absolutely nothing about it. Whoever puts that into his testimony adds to the sacred text.

3. *The testimony of Jude.*

In his short Epistle Jude very nearly repeats what Peter wrote in the second chapter of his second Epistle, or *vice versa*. He uses the word *agapais*, plural of *Agape*, and so raises a presumption that the feasts of which Peter speaks were the *agapais* also. But they may not have been thus known among the "dispersion," and hence Peter does not apply a name to them. Jude testifies thus: "These are spots in your feasts of charity [love-feasts], when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear." Here, then, is a feast again, and this time it is the *Agape*; that is, it is called *Agape* or love-feast. That it is so-called is no more in favor of the position that a full meal should be eaten in connection with the Communion, than the fact that it is not so called by Peter or by Paul is against such a position. The name is of no moment. Only from this time on we shall find ourselves in company with this name. But, as in the case of Peter, there is a fatal defect in this testimony. Jude does not say that these feasts were held in connection with the Communion. Touching the Communion Jude is absolutely silent. This silence to our mind, however, is no argument *against* the proposition that the Communion

and the *Agape* went together. That may be; but a thing is not proved because it *may* be. And hence this silence is no argument in *favor* of the proposition that these Christians did observe the Communion in connection with these *agapais*.

We have thus gone through the whole of the inspired testimony relative to this point, and have found :

1. That it was a common practice among Christians in different countries to assemble together and feast; that is, eat a meal.

2. That these feasts were the occasion of serious abuses in certain churches.

3. That they received gradually, or in some localities, the name of *agapais* or feasts of love—love-feasts.

4. *Possibly*, that at least in some churches these meals preceded the Communion, or took the place of the Communion; that is, the Communion was perverted into Grecian club-feasts.

Whatever may have been the relation of the Communion to these feasts, and however clearly such relation may be established by later and uninspired testimony, this is all that can be fairly deduced from the Scriptures. Other testimony may create a clear presumption that at the close of these feasts, of which Peter and Jude speak, it was customary to observe the Communion; but that does not put it into their testimony. The above four points are a complete summation of the testimony of the Bible.

CHAPTER IV.

The Agape in Ecclesiastical History.

IN the preceding chapter we dwelt upon the inspired testimony relative to the eating of a full meal in connection with the Communion. We found a full meal partaken of in ecclesiastical assemblies among the Jewish Christians in Asia Minor, but we found no intimations that the Communion was celebrated in connection with these meals. We also found a full meal partaken of among the Gentile Christians of Corinth at their public assemblies, but in Paul's testimony respecting these suppers it is not possible, without supposing a good deal, to conclude that they were eaten in connection with the Communion. They may have been a total perversion of the Communion into a feast like the *eranoi* of the Greeks. They may have been full meals in imitation of the last supper of our Lord and his Disciples without the Communion, but taking the place of the Communion.

This supposition is made the more probable when we bear in mind the two facts which most of all reflect light on Paul's language to the Corinthians. The first is the general testimony that the term "Lord's Supper" did not originally designate the Communion. The second, that

this supper among the Corinthians had so far displaced the Communion that Paul felt constrained to repeat what he had received of the Lord as the Communion of his body and blood. But it is still *possible* that the unpervverted custom ordinarily was to have the *Agape* precede the Communion. So it is possible in the case of the full social meal among the Jewish Christians in Asia Minor. Only we must carefully bear in mind that an admitted possibility is no proof. We must take the inspired testimony just as we find it, without additions thereto or subtractions therefrom. Later testimony cannot add anything to this inspired evidence, but it may render it morally probable that these meals were eaten in connection with the Communion.

The testimony of Paul brings us down to the year A. D. 59, about twenty-five years subsequent to the institution of the Communion. That of Peter and Jude was given probably in the same year, and about seven years later than that of Paul. What customs prevailed in relation to the Communion and social feasts during those twenty-five to thirty-two years among Jewish and Gentile Christians we know not. It is possible they frequently partook of full meals in their religious assemblies, but of their relation to the Communion nothing is known. We must carefully guard against the constant liability to carry our modern ideas back to those peculiar times. Then they had no houses of worship. They were shut out of the synagogues. Promiscuous assemblies of believers and non-believers for worship, such as we now see in our churches, were unknown. The Christians assembled in private houses, and thus spent their hours of religious fellowship more like families in social intercourse than as public assemblies for worship. Hence, that they should frequently, if not sta-

tedly, eat full meals together, for which each family furnished a portion, is a most natural supposition, although a supposition difficult of direct proof.

Leaving now the period of inspired history, let us inquire what testimony can be produced to prove that in post-Apostolic times the *Agape* was eaten in connection with the Communion. The testimony of modern historians, commentators and other authors, can be adduced to almost any extent to the effect that in the earliest post-Apostolic times the *Agape* and the Communion (perhaps) invariably went together. This is presumptive evidence that there is good, reliable testimony to this effect on record from men living in those primitive times. Let us see then what this testimony is.

We have but a limited number of witnesses to examine touching this point. Up to the middle of the third century we can find but seven names appealed to as witnesses in this controversy. These are Ignatius, one of the Apostolic Fathers, bishop of Antioch from A. D. 69; Justin Martyr, who lived between A. D. 89 and 176; Clement of Rome, a fellow-laborer with Paul, who is supposed to have written about A. D. 96; Clement of Alexandria, who died between A. D. 212 and 220; Tertullian, who flourished between A. D. 160 and 220; Cyprian, who suffered martyrdom in A. D. 258, and Irenæus, who died A. D. 202. We regret that we have not all their writings at our command, but we will reproduce the points to which each testifies as fully as we can from other sources.

I. Ignatius. Kitto says Ignatius in his letter to the church at Smyrna uses the expression, "making an *agapein*," in the sense of celebrating the Eucharist (Kitto's Cyclopædia, p. 82). But in the section immediately preceding the one of which Kitto speaks he refers particularly to the

Agape in the use of the word *agapan*. Kitto's statement is hence only an inference. Dr. William Smith only cites Ignatius as a witness for the celebration of the *Agape*, but not for its connection with the Communion (*Dictionary of Antiquities*, p. 40). Chambers in his *Encyclopædia* (p. 116) states that it was his opinion that Ignatius seems to regard the *Agape* and the Lord's Supper as identical. But that is not at all saying that he regarded the *Agape* and the Communion as identical, for in his time the Communion was *not* called Lord's Supper, but the *Agape*, we think, was.

II. Justin Martyr clearly speaks of the *Agape* as a customary religious meal in his time. He states that oblations or offerings for the meal were brought by the different church members, and that a common meal was made, while the surplus was given to those in need (*Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church*). But what is peculiar about this testimony is that when he speaks of the Communion he says nothing about the *Agape*. Dr. Kitto says the *Agape* is not even alluded to in Justin Martyr's description of the Communion (*Cyclopædia of Biblical Literature*; also *Chambers' Cyclopædia*).

III. From Clement of Rome we have nothing except some reference to the "oblations and sacred functions of the church," in which Dr. Waterland supposes that he "very probably refers to the Eucharistical service" (*Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 22). But as oblations were more commonly spoken of in connection with the *Agape*, there is an equal if not greater probability that Clement refers to these (see *Art "Oblations" Smith's Dict. of Christian Ant.*, p. 1420).

IV. Clement of Alexandria undoubtedly speaks of the *Agape* in one of his writings (*Pæ-dog.* II, p. 142). But our

information is too limited to enable us to give the purport of his testimony.

V. Tertullian's testimony is also given to the same effect for Western Africa. His account is in every way similar to that above outlined as the testimony of Justin Martyr. There is, however, this difference, that while Justin, when he speaks of the Communion, says nothing of the *Agape*, so that we cannot determine whether they were connected; so Tertullian in speaking of the *Agape* makes no mention of the Communion (*Kitto*, p. 82). He even speaks of the *Agape* as a banquet of God (*Doct. of the Eucharist*, p. 20).

VI. Cyprian, at least in one instance, speaks of the *Agape* as the Lord's Supper (*Bingham's Ant.*) It will be remembered that Lord's Supper here does not mean the Communion. Whether he implies that the Communion was connected with the *Agape* is hard now to determine. His terms are not well understood now. He speaks of the "Lord's Supper," of "corban" and of "eating part of the sacrifice which the poor had offered." All this we construe as referring to the *Agape*. But he further speaks of these "oblations" as if he meant to say that a part of this "sacrifice" were usually "sanctified" for use in the Communion (*Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 26).

VII. Irenæus speaks of "God's Supper," but without any allusion to the Communion (*Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 20). In other places he speaks "of the oblation of the Eucharist," but makes no distinction between *Agape* and Communion (*Ibid.*, p. 23). Oblations were the gifts of various kinds which were brought to the bishops in those times, and a part of them consisted of bread and wine (*Smith's Dict. Chr. Ant.*).

This is the testimony up to A. D. 250. Later there is

abundant evidence to prove that in connection with the *Agape*, for which oblations were brought, the Communion was generally celebrated, the elements being consecrated for this purpose from the oblations. Now, what may we justly conclude for the period from A. D. 70 to A. D. 250 from the testimony before us? One thing is not to be disputed—that ecclesiastical historians almost unanimously state that the *Agape* was observed by the church during this period; that it was made of the offerings brought by the membership to the place of meeting; that at the close of the *Agape* (generally) the Communion was celebrated. There are exceptions and variations in evidence, and there are witnesses only to these facts in certain localities; but the conclusion reached is that the *Agape* existed during this period generally in connection with the Communion. We need not quote authorities. We can furnish a score now lying before us if needed.

If the verdict of twelve jurymen is unanimously rendered, one should be in possession of new evidence to dispute it. So in this case. We are not disposed to dispute real evidence; we are not ready to set aside this verdict. Yet we know that there is room for a strong plea against so sweeping a decision, and in favor of a verdict which harmonizes more fully with all the testimony. But with all this, we have no hesitancy in saying that a common social meal was often eaten in the religious assemblies possibly in Apostolic, and certainly in immediately post-Apostolic, times; that at the close of this meal, and sometimes before it, frequently the Communion was celebrated; but whether the two were always connected is not in evidence.

CHAPTER V.

Is the Agape a Divine Institution?

IT has been seen that the direct evidence in favor of the *Agape* in connection with the Communion is very meager, so much so, in fact, especially in the first century, that upon it alone it is an extremely doubtful matter. But by taking in the evidence of the second and third centuries the fact seems to become morally certain that the *Agape* as a frequent meal in ecclesiastical assemblies was in existence as early as the time of Paul, and that the probability is that often, if not generally, at its close, but sometimes before the *Agape*, but as a distinct institution, the Communion was solemnized. Hence, this conclusion is adopted by Dr. William Smith (*Dict. Chr. Ant.*), Bingham (*Ant. of the Chr. Ch.*), Waterland (*Doctrine of the Eucharist*), Kurtz (*Ch. Hist.*), Eadie (*Eccl. Cyclop.*), Staunton (*Eccl. Dict.*), Fisher (*Begin. of Chr.*), Schaff (*Hist. of Apos. Ch.*), Kitto (*Cyclop. Bib. Lit.*), Neander (*Hist. Chr. Rel. and Ch.*), Coleman (*Anct. Chr. Ex.*), Cave (*Prim. Chr.*), Mac-knight (*Com.*), Mosheim (*Ch. Hist.*), Clarke (*Com.*), Lange (*Com.*), and others whose testimony lies before us. How few of these examined the original evidence we have no

means of knowing; but we doubt not that the majority depended on second-hand testimony. Their opinions are no evidence; but if they examined the original testimony we accept their views as we would the decision of a jury. This, then, brings us face to face with the question relative to the origin of the *Agape*. Is it a divine institution, or is it a human custom? Hence our third topic.

III. *Is there divine authority for the perpetual observance of the Agape as a religious ordinance?*

In the discussion of this question, by some of those who are in the affirmative, great stress is laid upon the question whether Christ and his Disciples, on the evening of the night on which he was betrayed, ate the Passover of the Jews or a special meal ordered by the Lord to be prepared for the occasion. We think there is something in this, but it is not vital. Either way Christ could institute a full meal in addition to the Communion. Either way he could institute the Communion by itself. Hence the vital question is, What did Christ command? This is everywhere recognized as the ultimate criterion. One of the staunch advocates of the *Agape*, speaking with reference to it, has said, "Do not believe that any thing *commanded by the Lord* is a mere formality. If it be sustained that a thing is of the Lord" (*Quinter and McConnell Debate*). In view of this fact one might regard the attempt to found an argument on the supposed fact (for it is not susceptible of proof) that Christ and his Disciples ate a special meal as a confession of weakness. It can only at best be used to raise a presumption that such special meal was *commanded* to be perpetuated. And this taken together with the practice of social fellowship-meals among the first Disciples, which naturally crystallized into the regular institution of the *Agape* even in later Apostolic

times, would, it is urged, make a two fold presumption in favor of such a command. But, until the command itself is produced, what do presumptions amount to? Would it be safe to adopt such a course as a principle in other matters? It is a matter of extreme doubt.

Again, that these combined presumptions are not sufficient to warrant us in *assuming* the existence of a command is further evident from the fact that there are good and conscientious men who believe that Christ and his Disciples did eat a special meal, and that the *Agape* was celebrated as early as Jude's time, who yet utterly deny that the latter is an ordinance commanded by Christ. There are at least three distinct opinions relative to the last meal Christ ate with his Disciples.

I. The most ancient and most widely received is, that our Lord and his Disciples kept the legal Passover, and on the same day with the Jews.

II. That our Lord anticipated the time of the legal Passover and so kept *his* Passover before the Jews did.

A modification of this is, that the Jews postponed their Passover, while Christ and his Disciples kept it on the legal time.

III. That our Lord kept no Passover at all, but had a special supper—a supper for himself and Disciples—at the close of which he instituted the Communion.

We have several authorities before us who take this latter view, besides those who hold that "this supper is a religious ordinance, instituted by Christ, and to be observed by his followers" (*Passover and Lord's Supper*). The object is to harmonize the testimony of the four Gospels, while it is held that John's Gospel cannot possibly be harmonized with the other three upon the supposition that the meal eaten by Christ and his Disciples on the

night of his betrayal was the Passover. That Matthew Mark and Luke clearly seem to testify that it was the Passover is not disputed. Dr. Wall says: "One would think by reading the three [Matthew, Mark and Luke], that that was the night on which the Jews did eat their Passover Lamb" (*Wall's Critical Notes on N. T.*, p. 33). Again: "Now this was the same night, and the same supper which the three do call the Passover, and Christ's eating the Passover" (*Ibid*). And yet Dr. Wall holds that it was not the Passover but a supper which Christ had ordered to be prepared for himself and his Disciples. What do these three Gospels testify?

I. That Jesus directed his Disciples to go into the city to such and such a man and tell him that they were sent there to arrange for the keeping of the Passover. Matthew says, Jesus said, "Say unto him, the Master saith, my time is at hand; *I will keep* the Passover at thy house with my Disciples (xxvi: 18). Luke: "He sent Peter and John, saying, Go and prepare us the Passover that we may eat" (xxiii: 8). Mark: "The Master saith, where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my Disciples? And he will shew you a large upper room * * there make ready for us (xiv: 13-15).

II. That these two Disciples went, as Jesus had directed them, "and made ready the Passover" (Matt. xxvi: 19; Luke xxii: 13; Mk. xiv: 16).

III. That in the evening Jesus and the twelve sat down to eat this Passover, which Peter and John had made ready (Matt. xxvi: 20, 21; Luke xxii: 14-16; Mk. xiv: 17, 18).

Whatever John may say of the meal at which Jesus washed his Disciples' feet, one thing is self-evident—that the testimony of these three evangelists is not to be nullified thereby. Indeed, John does not say anything which

necessarily comes in conflict with the testimony of the other Evangelists. It can and must either be harmonized therewith or else we must conclude that the occasion he speaks of was an entirely different one. This last supposition is a plausible one, and is adopted by some, but we do not deem it necessary in order to a solution of the serious difficulties which the narrative involves. But to overturn the plain testimony of these Evangelists in favor of the one is a proceeding which it is difficult to justify, and all the more so when there is no manner of necessity for it.

That we are fully sustained in thus interpreting the testimony of Matthew, Mark and Luke can be shown by abundant citations. Drs. Kitto, Smith, Jahn, Lange and a host of others, foremost as biblical scholars and interpreters, defend the view which we have here advanced. Even if our position were not so fully sustained, the mere possibility of a contrary view can have but little weight in determining the question as to whether Christ commanded the perpetual eating of a full meal in a religious capacity. We want something more positive,—less liable to serious and even unanswerable objections, and involved in fewer doubts as the basis of a religious ordinance. We, hence, dismiss this part of our subject as having no effective bearing upon the ultimate conclusion, and as an argument so weak and beset with such serious difficulties as to render it practically useless. We are justified in this conclusion by able advocates of the *Agape* as a religious ordinance. Eld. James Quinter, who has no superior in the Brethren Church as a defender of their special views, makes no use of this supposed argument in defense of the *Agape*. In a protracted discussion with Rev. N. A. McConnell he advanced, we presume, every argument of weight to his mind

to sustain his position, "that the meal [full meal, *Agape*] or supper that was eaten [by the primitive Christians], and not the bread and wine, was the Lord's Supper." But he does not even allude to the view that Christ and his Disciples ate a special meal, and not the Passover, on the night of his betrayal (see *Quinter and McConnell Debate*). He could, hence, not have thought it a point of much weight, or else too doubtful to be introduced in a discussion with an able opponent. And, if so, he was eminently right. For, first, it is a point not only not susceptible of proof, but so weakened by the unanimous and emphatic testimony of three Evangelists against it, as to make its introduction as an argument unjustifiable. And, second, it would still be equally necessary to prove that its perpetual celebration in religious assemblies was commanded. This last is the ultimate touch-stone of a religious ordinance. "Thus saith the Lord" is not only conclusive; it is absolutely essential. If it cannot be shown that the Lord commanded the eating of a full meal in a religious capacity in connection with the Communion, then no such meal can be eaten, except as a human custom and institution.



CHAPTER VI.

The Agape not an Ordinance according to Paul, Peter and Jude.

WE closed our discussion of the question, whether on the night Christ was betrayed he ate the Passover, or a meal specially prepared by his direction, with the statement that if it cannot be shown that the Lord commanded the eating of a full meal in a religious capacity in connection with the Communion, then no such meal can be eaten, except as a human custom and institution. We regard this as an unquestioned position. We hold that a Divine ordinance must have at least a Divine precept. The Church of the Brethren holds to the same position. Other Protestant bodies of Christians, we believe, without exception have adopted this principle. They hold that the first thing included in an ordinance is "an outward visible sign *used according to Christ's own appointment*" (*Hodge's Outlines*, p. 471). Can this element be found in the *Agape*?

There seem to be three ways in which it has been sought to supply this element of an ordinance in the *Agape*. These are :

1. To deduce it from the two facts that Christ and his Disciples ate a full meal before the Communion was insti-

tuted, and that at an early day a full meal was partaken of by the churches in connection with the Communion.

2. By interpreting the language of the Apostles Paul, Peter, and Jude so as to signify an approval of the full meal.

3. By so construing the words of institution of the Communion as to include the previous meal (See *Passover and Lord's Supper, and Quinter and McConnell Debate*).

Here is at once a confession of the absence of a plain command. This indirect evidence is only introduced because direct evidence is not procurable. To the first of the above three methods of argumentation we have decided and serious objections.

1. Such a course would open the way for every kind of innovation. The Roman Catholic sacraments of confirmation, extreme unction, penance, orders, etc., can boast of authority in some form like this. Even the defenders of indulgences, of infant communion, of liturgical serves, appeal to the Scriptures, to the Apostolic and post-Apostolic church, and sometimes to the blessed Lord himself. In the absence of a Divine precept we hence think it to be dangerous in the extreme to build religious ordinances upon such a foundation.

2. We have no evidence that in the primitive church the example of our Lord in eating a full meal on the night in which he instituted the Communion was ever considered equivalent to the ordaining of such a meal as a religious ordinance in the church. In the absence of such evidence this first argument breaks down completely. It is not enough to infer that they so considered his example. They did many things in imitation of acts of their Lord which were not considered binding. Besides, there are indications which clearly show that they made a great difference

between the full meal and the Communion. To these we shall refer later.

It is no argument in answer to the foregoing to say: The full meal is nowhere forbidden in the Epistles where allusions are made to it. Perhaps not. But such a position is untenable as an argument for a positive institution. Thus it is said: "There is not the faintest intimation in the entire connection [referring to II Peter ii: 13, and Jude 12] to indicate that they disapproved of these feasts" (*Passover and Lord's Supper*). They could approve of them, and still that would not make them divine ordinances. Jude says: "These people carouse with you, push themselves to your *Agapais*;" but it is singular that in Apostolic times they would not only do so with impunity, but that Jude does not insist upon separation. Did he, therefore, approve it? Neither are they anywhere referred to as possessing the dignity of an ordinance. Peter even possibly plays upon the word *agapais* when he inserts in his text the word *apatais*.

We said, perhaps the full meal is not forbidden. To our mind it is clearly remanded among traditionary customs by the Apostle Paul (I Cor. xi: 20-26). Here Paul condemns the Corinthians for their manner of feasting together. Then he in effect says: Instead of a feast having been instituted by the Lord, I will tell you what I received from him. He then gives the revelation which he received touching the thing Christ instituted on the night in which he was betrayed. But he leaves the *Agape* out. That he did not receive from the Lord.

3. There are indications that in primitive times the full meal was not regarded as of the same dignity and significance with the Communion, and that they regarded the Communion as supplanting the Jewish Passover as a dis-

tinct and complete institution in itself. No one can read the literature of the Communion as found in the writings of the early Christians without feeling convinced that to them it had a significance and dignity which do not attach to the *Agape*. Ignatius, as well as Justin and Irenæus, laid great stress on the mysterious connection subsisting between the Logos and the elements in the Communion. But of the *Agape* they fail to speak in such lofty strains. How Ignatius, Justin, Irenæus, Tertullian, Cyprian and others could speak as they do of the Communion only, without at times even mentioning the *Agape* in the same connection, is hard to understand if they regarded them both alike as inseparable divine institutions.

Moreover, at an early day the regular custom of having a full meal before the Communion was changed, and the meal succeeded the Communion or was wholly dispensed with, it being regarded requisite to take the Communion fasting (*Tertullian, De Cor. Militis*, § 3). At other times even in Justin's day (born A. D. 89) the Communion was administered without a meal (*Justin's Apol.* I. C. 65). And finally the *Agape* was given up altogether. Councils had made regulations concerning it, showing that they did not regard it as a divine institution, and upon the publication of Pliny's edict the *Agapæ* were generally discontinued. It is a strong proof in favor of our position, that the primitive Christians did not consider the *Agape* of divine authority, when it is remembered that "it is the only part of their public conduct which even torture and death could compel them to alter" (*Eadis Eccl. Cyclop.*). How it most likely originated we shall see further on. But in view of the foregoing facts is it not evident that this first argument in favor of the *Agape* as a divine institution is utterly insufficient?

It has already appeared incidentally how weak the second position is in which an attempt is made so to construe the language of Paul, Peter, and Jude as to signify an approval of the *Agape*.

1. That alone would not be sufficient. It is enough for the Communion when Paul says: "For I have received of the Lord" (I Cor. xi: 23); but unfortunately he does not say this of the *Agape*. Neither Paul, Peter nor Jude so speaks of the full meal as to imply that Christ instituted it as an ordinance.

2. As said, they speak of other things and approve them; but that does not make them ordinances. Some of the Roman Catholic sacraments are based upon what is found in the Epistles. They also speak of certain matters in connection with these meals in reference to which they say far less than we might expect. But to found an ordinance upon what Paul, Peter and Jude say about feasts is wholly unwarranted.

3. To our mind Paul rather condemns than approves the full meal. Speaking of the public feasts of the Corinthians he says: "What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in?" Then he virtually says: "Instead of such feasting I will tell you what I received of the Lord." Then he tells them how the Master instituted the Communion. Not a word about the *Agape*, and yet he states that the Communion was instituted after a meal. Then he concludes by saying: "If any man hunger, let him eat at home." As much as to say: When the Communion is celebrated that is not the time to eat to satisfy hunger. It is certainly a far easier matter to construe Paul's language to the Corinthians as spoken against the *Agape*, the supper, than in favor of it, and so we understand him. Weak, extremely weak, as these positions in favor of the *Agape*

seem, they constitute the burden of the argument in favor of it as a divine institution upon which its most prominent advocates mainly depend. Some of them we have not found anywhere attempting to prove that Christ explicitly commanded the observance of the *Agape* perpetually in the church. In *Passover and Lord's Supper* we can trace the third argument in favor of a full meal—that it was instituted—but the author of this work, too, relies principally upon these two arguments here examined. As an ordinance, therefore, the *Agape* would rest on an inference; it is *inferred* that Christ instituted it. To our mind this is quite insufficient. If we could upon such grounds and by such a process of interpretation lift the *Agape* into the exalted plane of a divine ordinance we would be ready for confirmation, extreme unction and other innovations. We might almost justify Tetzels with his indulgences, and insist on the Catholic doctrine of penance. The *Agape*, kept in the sobriety and simplicity of the earliest and purest times, was a beautiful custom. It might have been continued as a custom to the end of time with profit to all had it been sacredly guarded against encroaching evils; but it still could never attain to the dignity of an ordinance—a Divine institution.

CHAPTER VII.

Christ did not Institute the Agape.

WE have seen that the attempt to base a divine institution upon an implied command, or upon the supposed approval of the Apostles Paul, Peter and Jude, is a total failure. It remains to be seen whether any better success has attended the effort to find an explicit command. Has Christ anywhere directly and explicitly commanded the perpetual eating of a full meal in connection with the Communion? In the whole of Eld. Quinter's discussion with Mr. McConnell we have failed to find a direct affirmation of such a command. He confines himself to Apostolic and primitive practice. If he claims no command from Christ, then, so far as this point is concerned, he gives up the question. To infer a command from an alleged primitive custom is a dangerous experiment. Too many things found their way into the churches in Apostolic times without authority. Besides, it is a very easy matter, as we shall see, to account for the custom of a full meal in connection with the Communion without supposing a divine command. And as a different origin, in our judgment, will more fully meet the whole case, the probabilities are in its favor.

Eld. Beer (*Passover and Lord's Supper*, pp. 138-9) claims a Divine command for the eating of a full meal. Any such claim demands respectful consideration, for it is the point which is vital to the question. He says: "You will now bear in mind that our Lord had entered upon the institution of ordinances to be observed by his Disciples [referring to John xiii : 16, 17]. He had already washed the feet of his Disciples, and had enjoined the service upon them; and at the time he used this language they were sitting at the supper table, *and about to eat.*" At this point, Eld. Beer says, Christ said: "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." And as he used the plural—*these things*—he must have referred to feet-washing *and* the full meal. The conclusion is not a necessary one. Christ could properly and grammatically say just what he did with exclusive reference to the feet-washing ceremony and matters connected therewith. This is evident from the fact that all commentators, so far as we know, understand Christ to refer to the feet-washing. Does not Eld. Quinter, a staunch advocate of the *Agape*, so understand the Savior? If not, why does he not cite this "command" in favor of the *Agape* as a Divine ordinance? At any rate, hosts of unexceptional authorities contradict Eld. Beer, and affirm not only that such an interpretation is not a necessary one, but that it is not the correct one. Before us are the views of Lyman Abbott (*Com. on John*), Henry (*Comp. Com.*), Bloomfield, Clarke (*Com. on N. T.*), Benson (*Com. on John*), John Peter Lange (*Com. on John*), and several others, all of whom concur in rejecting the view that would refer the language of the Savior in John xiii : 17 to feet-washing *and* a full meal. They unanimously refer it to the feet-washing.

Not only is such an interpretation not a necessary one, but it is not tenable. Nothing but the exigencies of a

jeopardized theory could have suggested such an interpretation. Nothing had as yet occupied their minds but the circumstances connected with the feet-washing. This impressive scene had just ended, and the Savior sat down to eat. Without anything intervening he at once said: "Know ye what I have done to you?" He makes the ceremony which had just ended yet more the absorbing topic of thought by talking about it. About *it*, and not about it and something else, save obedience to this example with its pregnant meaning. In the light of these facts read: "So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them: Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord; and ye say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, the servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." To what does the phrase, *these things*, refer, but to what all the time he was talking about? Christ could not have properly said *this thing*, for before his mind was the whole scene of the feet-washing and the thoughts he had just uttered, to the latter of which he specifically refers as including the former. Of the correctness of this interpretation we have not a shadow of doubt.

But if this assumption of a command to eat a full meal in John xiii: 17 thus utterly vanishes, there is absolutely nothing left that can bear any resemblance to a Divine institution. There is no precept from the lips of the Master which explicitly or implicitly makes a full meal an antecedent ceremonial to the Communion. There only remains

an acknowledged primitive custom, which doubtless existed in Apostolic times, and for which we can be called upon to account. If the Lord did not command such a meal to be eaten how did it become a custom? Can we as fully account for it *without* supposing it to have been commanded *as by* supposing it to have been commanded? So we believe.

We have already seen the serious difficulties in the way of the claim of a Divine institution as seen in the history of the *Agape*. We have seen how Paul ignores it (if he does not repudiate it) when he tells the Corinthians what he received of the Lord. We have seen how, if Jude's reference to it is construed into an approval, he must also approve the association in it of wicked men with Christians. We have seen how the very men who among the ancients are brought forward as witnesses for the existence of the *Agape* fail in some prominent instances to connect it with the Communion, and how differently they speak of the latter from the manner in which they mention the former. We have seen how shortly after the opening of the second century the Communion was not always connected with the *Agape*. We have failed to find any claim advanced by any of the writers of the first centuries of the Christian era to a Divine command for the observancé of the *Agape*. And we have seen the *Agape* finally abandoned under the persecutions in Trajan's time, when the Christians could not be forced by torture and death to give up anything else. If to all these facts we add a reasonable account of the origin of the *Agape* as a human custom the case seems to be a very strong one.

Let the following points be carefully observed:

1. That the early Christians were principally Jews, including those addressed by Peter and Jude.

2. That a Judaizing tendency, or a disposition to adhere to Jewish rites and ordinances, lingered in the church for a long period, so that even Paul and other Apostles kept Jewish feasts, etc.

3. That Christ and his Disciples had come to constitute a family in their intimate and constant associations, and frequently "broke bread" together. So much had this become a custom that after his resurrection the Savior was revealed to two of his Disciples at Emmaus in the act of breaking bread (Luke xxiv: 30, 31).

4. That the early Christians immediately after Christ's ascension "were together and had all things common" (Acts ii: 44; iv: 32). That accordingly they were in the habit, probably every evening at least, to have a common meal.

5. That as churches were formed elsewhere outside of Jerusalem the force of circumstances compacted them together into clannish societies or social guilds; that the common fellowship-meal of the Jerusalem church or body of Christians was thus continued among them.

6. That similar common meals were customary among the various ethnic races and tribes whither the Christian religion found its way.

7. That as the Communion was instituted after a full meal—the Passover—so after these common meals the early Christians, possibly from the time of Christ's ascension, celebrated the Communion.

This is the conclusion to which many learned men have long since come. Dr. Lightfoot finds a precedent for the *Agape* or common meal in the *koinonia* of the Jews. He says that in the "evening of the Sabbath the Jews had their *koinonia*, or communion, when the inhabitants of the

same city met together in a common place to eat." In Paul's time among the Gentile nations they had their occasions when a common meal was eaten (*Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 200). Hippolytus, a disciple of Irenæus, represents the eating of a meal in connection with the Communion as a commemoration of the Passover Supper and first Communion (*Ibid*, p. 61.) Kitto, describing the solemn Passover Supper at which the Communion was instituted, says: "We need not look further to account for the institution of the *Agape*" (*Cyclop. Bib. Lit.*, p. 82). "It [the *Agape*] had a precedent in the habits of the Essene communities in Judea, and in the *eranoi* of Greek guilds or associations; in the *charisties* of Roman life, in the *sus-sitia* of Crete, in the *pheiditia* of Sparta" (*Dict. Chr. Ant.*, p. 40). "The custom of enjoying such social repasts existed also among the Greeks. With them these repasts were termed *eranoi*, club-feasts, which were associated with plans of mutual relief for charity toward the poor" (*Lange's Cor.*, p. 232). "The *eranos* was also called *deipnon apo spuridos*, where every guest brought his own dish" (*Dict. Gr. and Lat. Ant.*, p. 419). This is just what was done at the original *agapæ*, with which the author compares the *eranoi*. "In the account of the life of the first Disciples at Jerusalem, given in the Acts, it is implied that the chief actual meal of each day [the supper] was one in which they met as brothers, and which was either preceded or followed by the more solemn commemorative acts of breaking bread and the drinking of the cup" (*Smith's Dict. of Bib.*). According to Irenæus the *Agape* was observed in imitation of the Passover eaten by our Lord on the night of his betrayal (*Dict. Chr. Ant.*, p. 1420).

Thus we have a consistent and natural theory, for the

origin of a custom once so wide spread in the Christian church, but flourishing most under the very circumstances which rendered its introduction favorable, while churches were without houses of worship and constituted social guilds. More cannot be demanded.



CHAPTER VIII.

The Proper Name for the Communion.

HERE is an indirect argument for the *Agape* as a divine institution which requires separate treatment. Aside from this it seems to us that we have canvassed this whole question of the *Agape* with such a degree of thoroughness and fairness that we need have no fears of being charged with bigotry in rejecting it as a divine institution. Our all-sufficient answer, confirmed and established by an overwhelming combination of cumulative arguments, to those who ask why we do not practice it, is, that it was not instituted by the Lord ; that there is neither an explicit nor an implied precept for its observance. We have arrived at this conclusion in no hasty manner. We have canvassed the whole ground, and allowed, as we think, ample weight to every opposing fact and argument. There is but one thing that remains for our investigation ; one question which we need to answer, and one fact which requires explanation. This is the matter of the name of the institution which in this discussion we have invariably called the Communion. Hence, our last division :

IV. *The proper name by which to designate the Communion.*

We have deferred to this point an argument in favor of the *Agape* based upon the name "Lord's Supper," which occurs in I Cor. xi: 20. It is held that by this term the Apostle designates what later or in other localities was called the *Agape*; that it does not mean the Communion of bread and wine, and that, therefore, we do not celebrate or eat the Lord's Supper. To this we reply that there is at least reasonable and serious doubt whether "Lord's Supper" in the text quoted means the Communion. The objections to such an interpretation are so serious that we could not accept it, and more especially so in controversy. It seems to us that Paul meant their common meal, at which some were left without anything and others feasted to satiety and inebriety; or at most the *Agape* and the Communion together. So much we will concede. Does it, then, follow that we do not eat the Lord's Supper? As to *name*, it does in part, but nothing more. This supper which among the Corinthians was probably known as the Lord's Supper, was elsewhere and later called *Agape*. It was the very same meal which, as a divine institution, we have proved has no foundation. It does not weaken, much less invalidate, our argument to bring it forward under a different name.

Neither is it a particle against our position that Paul calls it the "Lord's Supper." He may have so called it because by that name it was known at Corinth, while in Asia Minor it was called *Agape* according to Jude. It was the same meal, eaten in imitation of the last Passover kept by the Lord and his Disciples. In some places these meals were called *Symposia* (Balsomon), in others *Koinai Trapezia* (Chrysostom), in others *Deipna Koina* (Ecumenius), and in other places by still other names. It is hence evident that "Lord's Supper," conceding that this in I Cor.

xi: 20 means the *Agape*, was simply the current name of this common meal among the Corinthian Christians; and we have already seen that in spite of the name Paul rather repudiates than approves it.

If, as we have intimated, "Lord's Supper" (I Cor. xi: 20) included both the full meal and the Communion, just as later *Agape* often most naturally did, it would still further weaken the objection. It would justify us in applying the name to the essential part of the service so designated, and then give this apparently natural paraphrase to Paul's words: "When ye come together to these meals ye do not eat the Lord's Supper as ye profess; for that is a *Communion*, while ye each eat his own supper. Instead, therefore, of doing as ye have been doing, I will tell you what I received of the Lord." But whatever may be accepted as indicated by this term, it will not do to build an ordinance upon it. It only occurs in this one text, and it undoubtedly had its origin in the fact that the *Agape* was eaten largely in imitation of the Lord's last supper, and by no means as indicating a divine institution.

Indeed, it is held by some that the name "Lord's Supper" primarily denoted our Lord's *own* supper with his Disciples on the night of his betrayal, and was by a figure applied to the *Agape* as a *memorial* of it. Such a use is regarded as common during several centuries following the Council of Carthage (A. D. 418).

Why, then, do we call the Communion the Lord's Supper? We presume it was called so first because it was thought Paul meant the Communion in I Cor. xi: 20. Now it is so called for that reason by many, and by others because it is a well-known name for the Communion, and yet by others because the Communion was instituted by the Lord in place of the Passover Supper. That it is not

a full meal is no very serious objection to the name. Suppers were almost universal in those days, as we have shown, and the bread and wine could be called the *Lord's* Supper as instituted by the Lord for his church instead of the *eranoi*, etc.

But we do not contend for names. We know that the Scriptures fail to furnish us an invariable name for the Communion, and that it is not profitable to contend about names (II Tim. ii: 14). Nor can we find any reason for preferring *Lord's* Supper to other names which might with perhaps better reasons be cited as Scriptural names. Except in the text under consideration (I Cor. xi: 20) we do not know that the name "*Lord's* Supper" was used definitely for the Communion until the time of Basil (A. D. 316—379). From his time on it was occasionally so used, but not generally until a later century. We would hence not object to the substitution of a name more fully sanctioned by Scriptural usage.

What, then, is the proper name for the Communion? In case we reject *Lord's* Supper as unscriptural can we find a Scriptural name? To this inquiry some have a ready answer. They assure us that "breaking of bread" is a Scriptural name. "Breaking of bread" we consider as an expression which primarily means to eat, to take food (*Greenfield*). It was an act preparatory to distributing food and eating by the master of the feast. Unless, therefore, there is clear Scriptural authority for it, this name would be open to the same objection with *Lord's* Supper—that the Communion is no meal. Also to the further objection urged by some, that it would only designate one half of the Communion. But unquestioned biblical authority is sufficient answer to all objections. Have we such authority in this case? Some confidently assert that

we have. Others deny it altogether, while some admit that “to break bread” means the Communion, and hence “breaking of bread” may also, though such use does not occur in the New Testament. The expression “breaking of bread” occurs only three times in the New Testament. In Luke xxiv: 35 it is not claimed that it means the Communion. In Acts ii: 42, 46 such an interpretation is disputed by Whitby and Wolfius in their comments on these texts, by Dr. Lechler in Lange’s Acts, by Dr. Clarke and others. Clarke says: “Breaking bread was that act which preceded a feast or meal, and which was performed by the master of the house when he pronounced the blessing; what we call grace before meat” (*Com. on Acts*). Hence as a name for the Communion this phrase stands on a slender foundation.

We are aware that “breaking of bread” in Acts ii: 42, 46 is rendered “breaking of the Eucharist,” in the Syriac version, but that is simply no translation, for “bread” does not mean Eucharist. Besides, then *Eucharist* would be the name of the Communion. In Acts xx: 7 the Syriac again renders “came together to break the Eucharist,” while several commentators who deny that in Acts ii: 42, 46 the Communion is intended, concede that in Acts xx: 7 such reference is not to be disputed. But this conclusion is not without its difficulties. The expression occurs twice in Acts xx., viz: in vs. 7 and 11, and each time it refers to the same thing. Hence the two count but as one instance. Now that Luke does not *necessarily* mean the Communion in this instance is rendered certain from a different use of “breaking bread” as above seen. Again, a few chapters further on (xxvii: 35) he uses the same phrase—“had broken”—which occurs in chapter xx: 11, where he says: “And when he [Paul] had thus spoken, he took bread,

and gave thanks to God in presence of them all: and when he had broken it, he began to eat." Does that mean the Communion? Certainly not. Neither does "to break bread" in chapter xx: 7, 11, mean the Communion. It doubtless means, as Dr. Clarke says many hold, the full meal which was frequently partaken of in those days by the Christians in their religious assemblies. That "breaking of bread" ever was used as a name for the Communion we are not prepared to affirm, though Dr. Waterland gives a solitary example from an Epistle to the Ephesians from Ignatius. But it is a very doubtful case.

Upon Scriptural grounds objections can be raised to other names somewhat in use in primitive times, but especially after the days of the Fathers. Thus Clement who lived in the latter part of the first and in the early part of the second century calls it *Oblation*, including, doubtless, the *Agape*, and having special reference to it. But in these times this name needs no investigation.

Sacrament is a name still in quite general use to designate the Communion. It is not found in the Scriptures, nor can it justly be regarded as an equivalent for any Scriptural term connected with the Communion. Its earliest use dates back to the early part of the second century, and later it was almost universally accepted.

Others would defend *Eucharist* as a proper and Scriptural name for the Communion. It is not found at all in this sense in the Scriptures. It is, and for centuries has been, as famous as any other name for the Communion. It first occurs in about A. D. 107 in Ignatius' Epistle to the church at Smyrna. After that it is found in all ecclesiastical writings. The name is taken from the account of the institution of the Communion—"And he took the cup and gave thanks" (*eucharisteeses*). Evidently the ordinance is

not called *Eucharist*, and the giving of thanks is not peculiar to it (see John vi : 11, 23 ; Matt. xv : 36 ; Mark viii : 6).

We need not dwell on other names which have obtained currency at different times, such as "Sacrifice," "Memorial," "Passover," "Mass," &c., for among these we cannot find one which is not open to more serious objections than lie against those which we have examined.

We are then shut up to one or the other of these alternatives—either we can select a name from among the least objectionable ones above examined, such as "Breaking bread," "Lord's Supper," etc. ; or there must be some other name not found in the above list which has more unequivocal authority in its favor in God's word. It may be at once said : "The Scriptural name is *Communion*." It is not so certain. *Communion* is a Scriptural word, but it does not hence follow that it is the name of this ordinance. Indeed, its use in the Scriptures might render it objectionable as a *name* for the ordinance. What *communion* hath light with darkness" (II Cor. vi : 14)? "The *communion* of the Holy Ghost" (II Cor. xiii : 14). In other places it is translated *fellowship*. Paul does not call this ordinance the *Communion*, as may be supposed (I Cor. x : 16). He says the effect of this service is the *communion* of the body and blood of Christ. His language gave occasion for the name, just as his language in the next chapter (I Cor. xi : 20) gave occasion for the name Lord's Supper. And while the latter name first appears as a distinctive title for the ordinance in the time of Basil, who lived A. D. 316–379 ; the former is so used first in a letter addressed to Cyprian about the middle of the third century. It, however, came into general use only about the same time with Lord's Supper.

From the foregoing it will be seen what difficulties beset the question of a proper title for this ordinance. We generally divide that honor between *Communion* and *Lord's Supper*, knowing well the objections which may justly be urged against both. If any one can furnish us a Scriptural name or term which is open to fewer or less weighty objections we shall be ready to adopt it in place of these. Till then we shall call it either the Communion or the Lord's Supper.



CHAPTER IX.

Breaking Bread.

THE expression "breaking bread," which occurs in the Acts of the Apostles, is by some understood to refer to the *Agape*, at the close of which it is affirmed the Communion was celebrated. Although we have no positive proof of such connection between the *Agape* and the Communion in the early days of the Apostles, yet a presumption has been established in favor of such a connection before the close of the Apostolic era. On the other hand, there are those who claim that "breaking of bread" is synonymous with the Communion. This is in direct contradiction to the presumption just indicated. Those who hold this latter view affirm that the primitive Christians communed or broke bread every Lord's day. And as we are everywhere known as strenuous defenders of primitive Christianity, we are censured for our departure from Apostolic precedent in this respect. We cannot plead guilty to such a charge. We do not, in the first place, know that the primitive Christians practiced "breaking of bread" every Lord's day; and, in the second place, we do not know that "breaking of bread" means the Communion. Should these two points be established it would still remain an

open question whether weekly Communion is obligatory or advisable in the absence of anything like a command to that effect. But for the present such a question need not be raised. We hence propose to confine ourself to the points now at issue, and hence shall seek in a calm and judicial manner to discuss the following two questions :

1. Did the primitive Christians meet every Lord's day to break bread (Acts xx : 7) ?

2. Is breaking of bread the same as the Communion (Acts ii : 42) ?

We shall take up these two questions separately and in regular order. Hence,

1. Did the primitive Christians meet every Lord's day to break bread ? On this point we are, so far as we know, wholly dependent on Scripture testimony. We are not aware that any one of the Fathers testifies directly to the point involved. They do testify that the Communion was celebrated every week in their time, and base this practice upon the traditionary weekly "breaking of bread" of the first Christians ; but we do not know of one who can add to the testimony of Scripture itself on this point. Pliny, Justin Martyr and others can be cited for the second century, but they give us no additional data for the Apostolic practice.

The testimony of the Scriptures is as follows : " And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teachings and fellowship, in the breaking of bread and the prayers " (Acts ii : 42). " And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread " (Acts xx : 7). We do not quote the passage from 1 Cor. xi : 20, to which the advocates of weekly Communion cite us, nor the one in 1 Cor. x : 16, because in neither passage is there any intimation as to the frequency with which the Lord's

Supper was partaken of or the bread broken; nor is there any evidence that the two are identical, as we shall see later.

Having then in these two texts from the Acts the sum of all the testimony of a direct character, what is the conclusion? Neither of the texts quoted says anything about the frequency of this practice of breaking bread. The first only assures us that the converts "continued steadily *

* * * in the breaking of bread and the prayers." How frequently the breaking of bread occurred it does not as much as intimate. The second states that upon the first day of the week they were assembled to break bread. It does not at all say that this was done every first day of the week. Hence, all that can be said, so far as this testimony is concerned, is that the matter is entirely open. They may have met every week, or at first every day; they may have met less frequently.

This conclusion cannot be weakened or modified by anything found in the Scriptures. In another and parallel passage, generally confounded with the first one above quoted, we read: "And they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house" (Acts ii: 46). But observe, it does not say how frequently they were in the habit of breaking bread, although the presumption seems to favor daily breaking of bread. The reading of these texts, together with the testimony for frequent Communions in the second century, has left the impression upon most writers on this subject "that in the days of the Apostles [breaking of bread] was frequent; either every day, or at least every Lord's day" (Waterland.) For at least weekly breaking of bread we can cite a dozen authors lying at our elbow. This should be a competent jury to test a question of fact, and yet, in the

face of this verdict, we doubt whether the *testimony* fully justifies it. Still, we are willing to concede that there are strong probabilities, in addition to the testimony cited, in favor of the breaking of bread, at least at Jerusalem, quite frequently for a time, and with considerable frequency at other places.

Having disposed of our first inquiry we now come to the second and vital question in this controversy. It is as follows:

2. Is breaking of bread the same as the Communion?

The question is usually stated in this way, viz: Is breaking of bread the same as the Lord's Supper? We are then referred to Acts ii: 42 and xx: 7, and to I Cor. xi: 20, where the expression "Lord's Supper" occurs. Accepting this statement we must, in the first place, know what is meant by the Lord's Supper. As we understand it the Communion is intended. Hence, let us call it by this name, as we have done without exception throughout these pages. Was, then, this breaking of bread the Communion? We answer in the negative. The reasons for this answer are as follows:

1. There is no evidence that the name Lord's Supper, by which we now so generally call the Communion, and which occurs in I Cor. xi: 20, designated this ordinance in Apostolic times. Upon this error quite a good deal of the argument for a weekly Communion is based. The Lord's Supper of Paul (I Cor. xi) is made identical with the breaking of bread in Acts, and then confounding these with the Communion the conclusion is reached that the Communion was celebrated weekly, if not daily. We will not dispute as to the identity of the meals spoken of by Paul and Luke, but neither speaks of the Communion. According to the most reliable testimony there is no au-

thority for saying that the Lord's Supper meant the Communion prior to the close of the third century. Dr. Waterland says: "Some Fathers *as high as the fourth century* thought" the name was so used. But if the Lord's Supper and the breaking of bread in the Acts are identical, and if the supper was not the Communion, then the breaking of bread was not. The Lord's Supper and the Lord's Table are very intimately connected, yet for more than three hundred years, says Dr. Smith, after the institution of the Communion the altar is but once called *a table* in the genuine remains of Christian writers. This exception occurs in an epistle of Dionysius of Alexandria to Xystus of Rome, A. D. 254. This is a clear indication that the Lord's Supper was not the Communion.

2. To break bread, or breaking of bread, means to take a meal, or it is equivalent to it; and generally, if not invariably, designates the partaking of a common meal with a host. Thence the expression. It was the duty of the host giving the meal to preside at the table and to break the bread and give thanks. It was the same as if we would now speak of cutting bread, which is done before each meal. "The Jewish people had nothing similar to our high-raised *loaf*; their bread was made broad and thin, and was consequently very brittle, and to divide these there was no need of a knife." The expression was common before the Communion was instituted. Hence, when Jesus gave a common miraculous meal to the multitude, as *architriclinus* he brake the bread (Matt. xiv: 9; xv: 36, *et al.*).

After His crucifixion, in the presence of two of his Disciples at Emmaus, the Savior in like manner "took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them" (Luke xxiv. 30). This was not celebrating the Communion. Paul did the same, acting in a manner as host, when a

prisoner on shipboard. It is said: "And when he had said this, and had taken bread, he gave thanks in the presence of all, and he brake it and began to eat (Acts xxvii: 35). Paul was not administering the Communion here. In Acts ii: 42 we are informed that the converts "continued steadfast * * * in breaking of bread," etc. This is enlarged upon in verse 46. So Henry, who understands it of the Communion: "They broke bread from house to house; not in the Temple, for the Eucharist was peculiar to the Christian institutes, and therefore they administered that ordinance in private houses." But as to this having been the Communion we differ from him. To our mind Luke says: They continued steadfastly in the Apostles' teaching and fellowship, entertaining each other at home, etc. The Authorized version says they continued daily with one accord in the Temple, and breaking bread from house to house." The Revision, sustained by the highest authorities (*Alexandere, Lange, Clark, et al.*), says, "breaking bread *at home*." The converts living at Jerusalem at their homes entertained the strangers and perhaps one another. Hence the Evangelist says: "Breaking bread at home did *eat their meat* with gladness of heart." Dr. Lechler is hence amply justified in saying: "It is true that Luke describes the manner in which the believers partook of bodily food * * * still, the phrase *kalan artion* [breaking bread] includes a holy element of worship, passing over into the relations of the natural and bodily life." He also, as Henry, makes verse 46 an enlargement of verse 42, in which he says the *Agape* is referred to, or what was later so called in some places. Hence there is nothing here to show that the Communion is meant.

Dr. Clarke says on verse 42: "Breaking of bread was the act which preceded a feast or meal, and which was per-

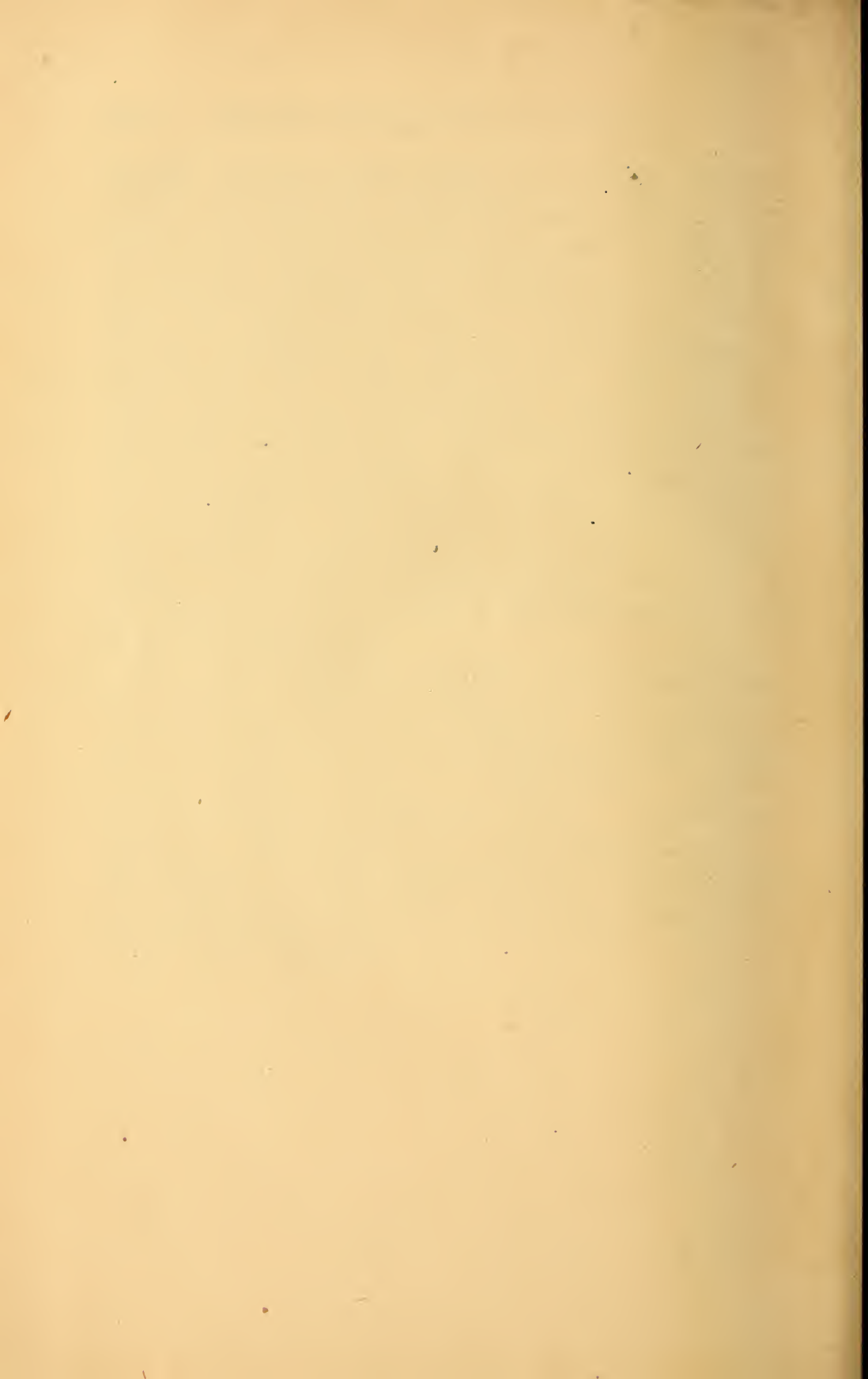
formed by the master of the house when he pronounced the blessing; what we would call grace before meat." And on verse 46 he says: "This signifies that select companies who were contiguous to each other frequently ate together at their respective lodgings on their return from public worship."

3. These common meals naturally became customary among the Disciples from the beginning. Christ and the twelve had been breaking bread together for more than three years. Similar common meals were partaken of among Jews and Gentiles. And now after the Crucifixion the custom would naturally become more deeply rooted by the last meal of Christ with his Apostles, which for so many years was by way of distinction known as the Lord's Supper. The meal in imitation of this was later also called the *Agape*, to distinguish it from our Lord's last supper, or what for brevity was called the Lord's Supper, not the Communion. It is the informal breaking of bread spoken of in Acts. And this last (or Lord's) Supper, and meals in imitation thereof, or the breaking of bread, have been, by very many authors, steadily confounded with the Communion. Dr. Waterland states that even the text I Cor. xi : 20 was not construed, before the fourth century, to mean the Communion, and that the name Lord's Supper was not used before that time.

Nearly all our authorities, as intimated in speaking of frequent Communion, confound the repeated common meals of those early days, the breaking of bread of Luke, with the Communion. Lange, however, says on Acts ii : 42 : "They adhered also to the religious meals (the *agapæ*)." Dr. Smith also makes the distinction very pointedly. He says : "The custom which prevailed in the Apostolic church of meeting at fixed times for a common meal of which all partook as brothers." Guericke, in his *Church*

History, speaking of the Agape or love-feast, refers to Acts ii: 46, and I Cor. xi: 20, and states that they were held "in commemoration of the last meal of Christ with his Disciples which preceded the institution of the sacrament." In view of these facts we are justified in concluding with Dr. Lange, "that the *klasei tou artou* [breaking of bread], in the New Testament, is not as a rule the same as the Lord's Supper" [Communion]. Spencer also says specifically of Acts ii: 43, that "*klasei tou artou* and *koinonia* are put, by hendiadys, for a common participation of bread broken." We seriously doubt whether any proof can be adduced to show that the Communion is anywhere referred to in the New Testament, besides the records of the institution, save in I Cor. xi: 23, and there it is not called the Lord's Supper.

But even if weekly Communions could be established, that would not render them obligatory. The simple reason is this: The Lord said, in instituting the rite: "This do in remembrance of me;" or, as Paul has it: "This do *as oft as ye drink* it in remembrance of me." And we have no data by which to determine authoritatively how often. We think there is every reason for saying that we should do it not less than once a year, and very good reasons for doing it more frequently.



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